

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 1917

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Statement, in my opinion, will fall very heavily upon the primary producers of Queensland.

At twenty-five minutes to 4 o'clock,

Mr. CORSER called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. GRAYSON: I think hon. members are to be excused, as they are in the other Chamber having a look at the new family. It seems to me that the Government, in framing their taxation proposals, have made a dead set upon the freeholders of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Not all freeholders; only the large freeholders.

Mr. GRAYSON: All freeholders. As a member representing a country electorate, I say that the land tax proposals of the present Government have reduced freehold values in Queensland by fully 50 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Made land cheaper.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am pleased to hear that the Minister assents to the statement. I will give one instance. A young man came from New South Wales and purchased a farm within 3 miles of the Warwick Post Office, and gave £18 an acre for that farm.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He paid too much for it.

Mr. GRAYSON: He did not pay too much at the time. That young man enlisted and went to the front about eighteen months ago, but before leaving he left power-of-attorney with his brother to dispose of the farm whenever he was asked to do so. That young soldier wrote to his brother from the front about two months ago and asked him to dispose of his farm. The farm was placed in the hands of several agents, and the highest offer received for that farm was only £10 an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Perhaps another soldier will get it at that price.

Mr. GRAYSON: What soldier is in a financial position to buy a farm at that price? Will the Government advance sufficient money to any soldier to buy that farm at £10 an acre? We have heard it said time and again by members on the front Treasury bench that the land tax imposed by the present Government would cheapen the price of land. It has reduced the price of land to the small freeholder. We have also heard repeatedly from the front Treasury bench that it would cheapen land to those who wished to acquire land for settlement. As a matter of fact, since the Government imposed a high land tax, no large estates have been cut up. There are no buyers, and as a result the large landholders have the land lying on their hands. The land tax proposals of the Government are nothing short of confiscation. I say that advisedly. I know several aged men who have devoted the last fifty years to acquiring a home, and they now find in the evening of their lives, when they wish to retire, that they are unable to dispose of their farms. No one will buy their farms, and they remain a drug on their hands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They did not make the increased value.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 10 OCTOBER, 1917.

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

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

(*Mr. Bertram, Maree, in the chair.*)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Question (proposed new taxation, vide page 1404) stated—

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*): The Treasurer's Financial Statement contains one of the most drastic proposals ever placed before Parliament. The taxation proposals that the Government have outlined in the Financial

[*Hon. A. J. Jones.*]

Mr. GRAYSON: Decidedly they did. I contend that the hardy men and women who went out into the scrubs on the Darling Downs and in the coastal districts, cleared the scrubs, cultivated the land, fenced it in, and erected homes—they are the ones who did make the value of the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They made the improvements, not the value.

Mr. GRAYSON: Decidedly they made the value.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The construction of railways and general progress made the value.

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. gentleman himself started a selection.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I had a leasehold in the drought time.

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. gentleman started a selection, and he will admit that he was a failure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. gentleman must admit that he was a downright failure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, I was not. I never got a start.

Mr. GRAYSON: Yet we have heard more from the hon. gentleman than from any other hon. member during my time in Parliament as to how men should conduct their business on the land. He makes longer speeches about land settlement than any other hon. member, and yet when the hon. gentleman tried the same game himself he proved a failure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I was not a failure, because I never got a start.

Mr. GRAYSON: The hon. gentleman forfeited his selection. There is no question about that. It seems to me inconceivable that in a State like Queensland, where only 6 per cent. of the land is held under freehold tenure, that the Government should make such raids on the freeholders. There is no other State in the Commonwealth that has the heavy land tax that Queensland has.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That shows how advanced we are.

Mr. GRAYSON: I would like the Secretary for Public Instruction to compare the land tax in New South Wales with the tax on freeholds in Queensland. In New South Wales the exemption is £240, and the tax is 1d. in the £1.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Ours is a great deal better than theirs.

Mr. GRAYSON: Then take Victoria. In Victoria there is more land alienated than in any other State of the Commonwealth. I believe I am correct in saying that fully 70 per cent. of the land in Victoria is held under freehold tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is why so many have been driven out of Victoria into Queensland.

Mr. GRAYSON: In Victoria the exemption is £250.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In some districts the population is diminishing as the years go on, on account of land monopoly.

Mr. GRAYSON: In Victoria the exemption is £250, and the tax is $\frac{1}{2}$ d. in the £1. I am giving these figures from the latest "Knibbs."

Mr. LAND: You are very lucky you have not got a heavier land tax.

Mr. GRAYSON: In South Australia they have imposed a land tax with an exemption on £5,000 of 1d. in the £1. This is sufficient proof to me that South Australia, which is one of the largest wheat-producing areas in Australia, is encouraging the farmers to bring land under closer cultivation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why are some men from South Australia coming over here to look for land?

Mr. GRAYSON: We have heard it stated repeatedly by hon. members sitting on the Ministerial side of the House that the farmers in Queensland hold too much land, but a small farm is of no earthly use to a man who wants to go in for wheatgrowing. It would pay no man to grow wheat on a small scale. He has got to buy machinery costing from £400 to £500.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: And pay £18 an acre for the land in addition. We want to reduce that price.

Mr. GRAYSON: The land which has been sold for £18 an acre during the last few years has been lucerne land, which is much more valuable than wheat land. It just goes to prove the ignorance of the hon. gentleman as to the value of land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I know grazing land in Queensland for which £16 an acre was paid years ago.

Mr. GRAYSON: I would like the hon. member to give the district in which that occurred.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In the Jondaryan district; and they were ruined.

Mr. GRAYSON: The very highest price paid for Jondaryan land was £4 an acre, and I am told to-day that you can buy the best of the land on the Jondaryan Estate for £2 an acre.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not say the Jondaryan Estate, I said in the Jondaryan district.

Mr. GRAYSON: I am as positive as I am standing here that the hon. member cannot prove that statement, and I would refer him to the hon. member who represents that district, the hon. member for Dalby.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Victorians came here and paid that price and went away ruined.

Mr. GRAYSON: I know land which was bought about six years ago at from £4 to £6 an acre, and as soon as the land tax proposals of the Government were made it was sold at half the price. I would like the hon. member to rise in his place and give the facts of the case he mentioned. Then we come to Western Australia, which has become a great wheatgrowing State. The exemption in Western Australia is £50 and the tax is 1d., but there is a rebate on land improved—that is, there is a rebate on every acre of land under cultivation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you approve of that?

Mr. GRAYSON: Decidedly I do. I would wipe out the exemption entirely! I say there should be no exemption whatever. I

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have stated so previously in this House. I contend that a fair land tax would be a tax without exemption, so that every man who owned a 16 perch allotment would contribute towards the taxation of the State. In Western Australia, the lowest tax paid is 2s. 6d. I am quite correct in saying that in no State in the whole of the Commonwealth of Australia is the freeholder taxed to the tune he is in Queensland. There is no encouragement for men to engage in the farming industry.

MR. CARTER: You think it does not make land cheaper?

MR. GRAYSON: As I have already stated, it is utterly impossible for farmers on small areas to make a living growing wheat, and they must have large areas, and those large areas are subjected to a heavy tax in Queensland. The time will come in another few months when the present Government will have to face the electors of Queensland, and I can assure hon. members that the electors do not forget the treatment they have received at their hands. No Government have been more unsympathetic to the primary producers than the present Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You know the very opposite is the case.

MR. GRAYSON: I would like the hon. member to mention one thing they have done in sympathy with the primary producer.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mention anything they have done against him; that is the way to prove your case.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They advanced £47,000 for seed wheat.

MR. GRAYSON: I admit that there is one—they abolished the guarantee on railways. The Minister for Education has mentioned that they supplied seed wheat to the farmers last season, during one of the most disastrous droughts we have had for many years. It is quite true that the Government did supply seed to the farmers, but those farmers will be compelled to pay 5 per cent. interest. They do not object to that.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They have not paid it yet.

MR. GRAYSON: But they will pay. They have not had time to get a crop. The farmers do not want anything for nothing.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government are also giving them a railway service in your district which does not pay, and taxing the general taxpayer to do it.

MR. GRAYSON: The hon. member for Windsor said the other night that the farmers were always whining. I would like to know when the farmers come to the Government whining for anything. Is it not the workers and the labourers who are always whining—for increased wages? They get those higher wages and the farmers never objected. The hon. member for Ipswich a few nights ago advised the Government to spend money—spend, spend, spend. He believed in spending money as fast as ever you could borrow, and he went further and stated that he believed in making the other fellow pay—the man who was in a position to pay. “Make him pay up,” he said, “every time, and keep the wheels of industry going.” Do we find that during the regime of the present Government any industry has been started? To my mind no industry of any account has been established in

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Queensland during the two and a-half years the Government have been in power, for the reason that men with capital will not engage in industry in Queensland with the industrial unrest we have had during the term of the Government. We were told that when the Industrial Arbitration Bill was passed there would not be any more industrial unrest—all the employees of the Government service would be content with the awards of the Court. But we find that there has been more industrial unrest during the term of the present Government than during the term of any other Government that have been in power. The Minister for Railways cannot deny that. I think it is a deplorable fact that men who want to start industries and are inclined to put capital into enterprises have not that confidence in the Government of Queensland to make them feel justified in doing so, and thus giving additional employment.

We find that the Government have entered into many State enterprises during their term of office. They have started butchers' shops.

HON. J. A. FHELLY: Hear, hear! Would you like to get one in Warwick?

MR. GRAYSON: I do not represent Warwick, but if I represented Paddington I might say, “Hear, hear”—if my constituents could get their meat at 2d. to 3d. less per lb. than under ordinary conditions. In any case, it is the easiest thing in the world for the Government to run enterprises of this kind if they are able to commandeer meat from the pastoralists at 2d. per lb. cheaper than they could get it through the ordinary channels. Any Government could make a profit out of a business of that kind. But the pastoralists are not all big men, they are not all large leaseholders, and many of these small pastoralists are suffering. I am glad the Minister for Lands is in his place, because he is the organiser of these shops. He is a business man, and I may tell him that I know well—as an ex-business man—that if I could go to the merchants and get my goods at 30 per cent. or 40 per cent. less than the other fellow, I could make a great success of my business. And the same thing applies to running these butchers' shops. Then we have State sawmills. I find that the loss to the State through the sawmills last year was £1,913. I would like to know what was the reason why the Government embarked on the enterprise of State sawmills.

At 4 o'clock,

MR. CORSER called attention to the state of the Committee.

THE CHAIRMAN: I am satisfied that there is a quorum within the precincts of the House.

MR. GRAYSON: At the present time there are several sawmills on the Darling Downs which have been lying idle for the last three or four weeks, so that I do not wonder that the State sawmills lost £1,913 last year. This amount the taxpayers will have to make good. With regard to the expenditure of £18,000 or £19,000 on a State hotel, I believe the Minister for Lands [4 p.m.] inwardly agrees with me, although he would not say so, that the £18,000 or £19,000 would have been

better expended in conserving water. If the Government had expended money in damming up the head of the Condamine or its tributaries they would have conserved water for all time, and then the farmers on the Darling Downs would have no fear as regards a supply of water during a time of drought. I contend that the expenditure of £18,000 or £19,000 on a State hotel was nothing but a waste of money, as there was absolutely no necessity for such an expenditure. However, we shall see later on what the result will be.

Now I come to the question of land settlement. During the time the present Government have been in power, there has been less land settlement—particularly agricultural land settlement—than there has been during the same period for the last twenty years. I cannot make out what is the reason for this. Possibly it may be that settlers are not inclined to accept the perpetual lease system. When the late Mr. Bell was Minister for Lands, you could see a crowd of intending selectors around the land offices looking for land. But, during the time the present Government have been in power, I have never seen a group of intending settlers waiting round the Lands Office. It is a deplorable thing that in a State like Queensland, where we have millions of acres of splendid land, there are no applicants for the land, particularly for land suitable for agricultural settlement. My opinion is that one of the reasons for this is that the younger generation, instead of being eager to follow in their fathers' footsteps and select land and become farmers, are so disgusted after listening to their fathers' tales of the way in which they have been treated by the present Government, who have imposed land taxation and other restrictions upon them—these farmers' sons are not inclined to settle on the land. The result is that we find those fine young men are coming to Brisbane and seeking employment in the Railway Department, the Police Department, and other public departments. I know that for a fact, and that, in my opinion, is one of the primary reasons why farmers' sons, who would make ideal settlers on the land, having been brought up to that occupation, immediately they attain to manhood, get so disgusted listening to their fathers' tales of woe as to the way in which they have been treated by the present Government that they will not engage in the farming industry.

The HON. SECRETARY: Why don't you sell them some of your land cheap?

Mr. GRAYSON: I have no land to sell. I have mentioned the fact that there has been a falling off in the selection of agricultural farms. There is also a great falling off in grazing farm selection. There have not been nearly the number of selections taken up under the grazing farm system of selection during the last year that were taken up three or four years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There are 60,000 men out of the country; don't you know that?

Mr. GRAYSON: No, I do not know that. There are not that number out of the country. The facts I have referred to show that there is a screw loose somewhere. Where that is I should like to find out. I have given what

I consider to be the reason why farmers' sons have turned their backs upon farming and sought employment in Brisbane. The Government certainly do not encourage that class of settlement. Farmers' sons and selectors' sons receive little encouragement to select land in Queensland in order to increase production, and when those young men come to Brisbane, they take employment from the constituents of the hon. member for Paddington.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: What are you taking from me?

Mr. GRAYSON: I say that the farmers' sons who come to Brisbane and obtain employment here are taking employment from your constituents.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: I cannot quite follow your argument.

Mr. GRAYSON: Those fine, fresh, young men when they come here, obtain employment which would otherwise be given to your constituents.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: The Paddington people are some of the best people in Queensland; they are noted for their intelligence, especially politically.

Mr. GRAYSON: The Government have acquired the Cecil Plains Estate, and have had it on their hands for eighteen months, during which time it has been growing Bathurst burr and prickly-pear, but notwithstanding that fact the Government are making no effort to subdivide the estate and throw the land open for selection. I believe that if it were thrown open for selection a large area of the land would be taken up immediately.

I wish now to refer to the £20,000 provided for the upkeep of the Brisbane Hospital. That is absolutely unfair to the general taxpayers of Queensland. The wealthiest people of the State live in Brisbane; indeed, the whole wealth of Queensland is concentrated in Brisbane, and I contend that the local authorities in the metropolitan area should be compelled to support the hospital.

Mr. CARTER: You bitterly opposed that proposal when the Hospitals Bill was before the House.

Mr. GRAYSON: That Bill was applicable to the whole of the State.

Mr. CARTER: No; it was only applicable to Brisbane.

Mr. GRAYSON: I understand that it was applicable to the whole of the State, and I hold that you cannot bring a measure of that kind into operation in the country. The people in the country are willing to maintain their hospitals. Anyone who goes into a pastoral district will find that the hospitals are well maintained by the residents. There is absolutely no trouble in connection with the hospital in my district.

Mr. GLEDSON: Had not your constituents trouble with the hospital in Warwick?

Mr. GRAYSON: No.

Mr. GLEDSON: You tell them that.

Mr. GRAYSON: They had no trouble that I am aware of. At any rate, I fail to see why the whole of the taxpayers of Queensland should be compelled to bear their share

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of the cost of maintaining the Brisbane Hospital, and that is what this vote of £20,000 means.

Mr. PAYNE: And keep up their own hospitals, too.

Mr. GRAYSON: And keep up their own hospitals, too, as the hon. member interjects. If this £20,000 is expended in the upkeep of the Brisbane hospitals, the general taxpayers of Queensland will have to contribute their share of the amount, and, as the hon. member for Mitchell says, will have to maintain their own hospitals as well. There is very little trouble in collecting sufficient funds for the upkeep of the country hospitals, and I think the Brisbane Hospital should be maintained by local contributions.

I do not wish to delay the Committee any longer, but I may say, in conclusion, that this Financial Statement will be a shock to the people in the country districts. There has been no more drastic legislation introduced in the Parliament of Queensland in the way of financing the State than is foreshadowed in the Statement which has been presented to the House. The result of the proposed taxation will be that many men will do their utmost to dispose of their freeholds, because it will be utterly impossible for freeholders to bear the extra taxation which is to be imposed upon them by the Government. The incidence of the income tax is also very doubtful.

Mr. PAYNE: It only applies to incomes over £3,000.

Mr. GRAYSON: The supertax is on incomes of £400 and over. The land tax will be a heavy burden on farmers, especially in drought time, when it will be impossible for them to meet their obligations.

Mr. CARTER: Why, it will reduce the price of land.

Mr. GRAYSON: It has reduced the price of land, as I have already stated, all over Queensland. I question very much if they would be able to get the money they paid the Government for the land, apart from the improvements they have put on. I would like to say, in conclusion, that when the electors of Queensland have an opportunity of reviewing the legislation which has been passed by the present Government, there will be a revulsion of feeling right throughout Queensland, and the present Government will be relegated to the Opposition benches. I am positively certain, judging by the expressions of those I meet in the country and in the towns, that the present Government's actions, during the term they have been in power, will not be approved of by the electors.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): It is a surprising state of affairs to find that in the Financial Statement the Government have the audacity to say that during their term of office they have been particularly careful. I notice, on page 7 of the Financial Statement, that the Treasurer has seen fit to place in the report the statement that—

“The Government exercised, during the year, the greatest caution with regard to expenditure; there were no costly innovations, and no extravagance; on the contrary, a high degree of moderation in disbursements was a noticeable feature in the administration of all departments.”

Mr. Grayson.

What made it necessary for the Treasurer to make that statement? Only to try and deceive the people of Queensland as to the true position—a position which is so clearly set out in the Financial Statement and in the report of the Auditor-General. It was that position which made it necessary for him to make that claim.

Yet we find that during that same period the present Government—which is against the spending of large sums of borrowed money—expended, with revenue, no less than £12,000,000 of the State's money; and that money has been spent during a time of trouble; and not one penny has been spent for the better prosecution of the war.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. CORSER: Not one penny of that money has been spent for the better prosecution of the war.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true; and you know it is not true.

Mr. CORSER: It is true; and I know it is true. What is further, the hon. member is trying to claim, by his interjection, that the money that was borrowed from the State Savings Bank and lent to the soldiers on interest was money spent for the better prosecution of the war. If that money is to be included—and it is the only shadow of money that has been spent in any way connected with the war—it shows you the absolute narrowness of the hon. gentleman's mind, and how the Government attempt to clutch at a straw in an endeavour to contradict a statement which is an absolute fact. Not one penny of this £12,000,000 has been spent for the better prosecution of the war. And yet we find that there is to be increased taxation on increased taxation, which was an increase when the late Government left the front Treasury benches. The sum of £37,000,000 is to be expended during the term of the present Government, and that money is to go to add to the ever-increasing taxation which must be placed upon the taxpayers of Queensland to pay the interest which is due to go to “Ikey Mo” or somebody else. Wrapped up in the little red book issued by the present Government, with which they gulled the electors at the last election, is a statement that they are against the borrowing of large sums of money, for which we had to expend so much to be sent to the other side in order to make it good. They claim that it was necessary that money should be made available from time to time to create a sinking fund which would be of some use. This little book states—

“With the imposition of a land tax, the cessation of public borrowing, the inauguration of a sinking fund to redeem the public debt, the establishment of other planks in our platform; when these are carried out the financial measures of the Labour party will be complete.”

In this statement, on page 25 of the little red book, we find that, with the imposition of a land tax, we will have a cessation of public borrowing. The Government has imposed a land tax. Yet there has never been on the front Treasury benches in this State a Government that has expended—not only in one year, but in the two financial years—so much borrowed and trust money; and are

out to expend as much more as they can get during the coming season. In the next sentence we find that with the inauguration of this it would mean the inauguration of a sinking fund to redeem the public debt of the State. What do we find? How much money have these gentlemen contributed to or provided for the sinking fund of the State, in proportion to the amount they have expended, and with the huge public debt of the State? We find that no greater amount than £140,000 has been placed to the credit of this fund.

Mr. MORGAN: And now they are going to rob it.

Mr. CORSER: And now they are going to rob it, most decidedly; as they are robbing every account—trust account and credit account—that they can lay their claws on. This continued borrowing only goes to prove that Queensland's credit is going down on the other side. Queensland had a credit when it was represented by the late Government, and that credit has absolutely gone since this Government has come into power, through the assistance of tripe like that which I have in my hand. On the top of this Statement of the Treasurer that there has been such an amount of carefulness, that there was no intention at all of doing anything that would rob the people of the money that was their due, we find in the Auditor-General's report that on the 9th December, 1916, compensation was paid in respect of 445 heifers belonging to Mr. D. A. Cameron, of Woodlands, Mitchell. They were dipped at Mitchell, and through the effect of improper dipping—carried out under the supervision of Government inspectors of stock under the Stock Act—409 of those heifers died. After inquiry it is found that they died because of carelessness under the department's dipping system, and £3,000 compensation was paid. It was a just compensation, but that £3,000 was taken from a fund which was created by the people who own cattle; from a fund that was created under the Brands and Diseases in Stock Act. If you will look at the report of the Auditor-General, you will find, on page 180, that this amount was taken from this fund, which is a fund to the credit of those who hold a brand, and who wish to have proper inspection of stock under the Diseases in Stock Act. Any man, however small a stock-owner he is, has to pay proportionately for the brand he holds. The Diseases in Stock Act necessitates that he pay at the rate of so many head of cattle. That fund was created for that particular purpose; and we find that from that fund this money was taken; and from it also was taken money for the assistance of a particular widow. That widow, no doubt, is entitled to that amount of money, but why should the department want to place that responsibility on the shoulders of the few who are contributing to this fund? We cannot secure from that department proper assistance in connection with diseases and stock, simply because that fund is continually being robbed by the Government for the paying off of other indebtedness with which the fund should have nothing at all to do.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What fund should it have been charged to?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman says what fund should it come from? It should come as a tax on the revenue of the State; and those things should be paid for out of

revenue without showing any particular loss. There should be provision that the increased taxation from year to year should meet all those contingencies without placing them upon the shoulders of the producer and taxing one fund under which we should not find them at all. I referred a little while ago to a particular case where the amount was charged to this account. It is the case of the widow of a late inspector of stock, to whom £630 was paid by way of workers' compensation insurance, and expenses on settlement. That is how the present Minister for Agriculture allows the various branches of his department to be robbed of that which is to their credit, and allows them to get into such a state that they can only be put right by increasing the taxation of the various branches to come under his control.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That sum will be recovered from the State Insurance Department.

Mr. CORSER: The Minister knows perfectly well that the requests for assistance under the Diseases in Stock Act, and the requirements for assistance, are analysed by him to such an extent with the pruning knife that really on many occasions the Minister prunes a little bit too much; and he allows that fund to be exploited in other ways by other Ministers and colleagues in the Cabinet. £12,000,000, I say, was expended from loan and trust funds and from revenue, and not one penny went to the better prosecution of the war.

Mr. GLEDSON: Not for diseases and stock.

Mr. CORSER: Not for diseases and stock, which certainly would get a little bit more if we had that amount to the credit of the diseases in stock fund. A great amount of public money has been expended on a disease, unfortunately, that keeps hon. members in their places, which is responsible for the rotten state of the country to-day—a rotten disease that has been spreading among a section of the workers of Queensland, to the detriment of those workers and to the detriment of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What disease are you talking about?

Mr. CORSER: A disease that is responsible for the front Treasury benches being occupied by individuals similar to the gentleman who has made that interjection.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What disease are you talking about?

At half-past 4 o'clock,

Mr. FOLEY took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. CORSER: The disease that has been responsible for the holding up of seventeen transports in the ports of Australia; the disease that has been responsible for the holding up of a hospital ship; the disease that the Premier tried to make capital out of when he introduced his conscription of waterside workers Bill; and that same disease is making possible to-day the cancellation of the agreements that the shipowners were making with those people, and the cancellation of the successful arrangement that those shipowners have been making during the last few days which, by the actions of the present Government, are likely to be flouted and nullified.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Why don't you talk sense and not rave?

Mr. CORSER: These shipowners who have been trying to carry on the trade of the

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country are likely to be flouted by the actions of the Government, and flouted for political purposes because the conscription Bill introduced by the Government did not go the whole way in bringing about the debacle that was likely to come about. The hon. gentleman knows very well that that same disease is being spread and fostered by the money collected by the present Government, in the hope that they will be returned to power when they go to the country in a few months.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How are you affected by the disease?

Mr. CORSER: We are affected in our endeavours to produce something from the land, and the smaller the man the greater is he hindered by the disease that is being spread. We are affected in other ways, and the country is affected to the extent that no less than £737,000 was lost on the railways. The railway revenue, it is claimed, was reduced because of the bad times that we have had. It is claimed that during this last year there have been no rains to enable the producer to grow something to feed our railways, and yet we find in the Treasurer's Financial Statement, when he tries to cover up another statement, he does not say that the bad seasons or the want of rain have been responsible. He says that the heavy floods in the Central district during the year, with the consequent dislocation of traffic, and the coal troubles in New South Wales, necessitated a reduction in the number of trains which made possible the loss that we find. In one instance they claim that our trouble is due to the want of rain, and on the other hand it is claimed that the trouble is due because there is too much rain—because our railways have been flooded and washed away. We find that the expenditure from the loan fund alone has increased from year to year until we have established a record in that regard; and the expenditure from trust funds has similarly increased, so that the Government have got a record in that regard as well. Dealing with the railway expenditure and railway losses, I find that the cost per train per mile, according to the Auditor-General, is 8s. 6½d., and the earnings per mile on the railways of the State are 7s. 1¼d., which leaves a loss of 1s. 4½d. for every mile that the trains in Queensland ran during the last twelve months. That is working it down to a pretty fine point, but it shows clearly the position the country is likely to get into. Although this great State enterprise did provide good wages and better conditions, and did provide cheap fares, the figures show that under the present Government, without the additional £450,000 increase in wages to the railway workers, it lost during the last twelve months 1s. 4½d. per mile for every train that was run.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Do you say they were getting good wages before the present Government came into office?

Mr. CORSER: It is quite possible, under ordinary circumstances, that in two years' time the wages now paid by the Government will be said to be a very poor wage indeed. Why did they not in 1915-16—when they increased the railway wages by £150,000—provide for this extra £450,000? That is the disease we are suffering from every day; less and less returns from our railways, as clearly shown by the Commissioner. This is the question that the Railway Department

should answer. This is the question that the Railway Commissioner has asked the public of Queensland. The Commissioner says—

"The industrial problems must be seriously considered in the future. The problems to be considered include the following:—"

This is the question that is asked by the Commissioner and not answered in his report to Parliament—

"1. Are we getting value for payments made by the department to its servants?

"2. Are we getting value for the services rendered to the public?

"3. What effect has unionism and arbitration had on the output of the staff and the efficiency and discipline of the service?"

Those are the questions that the Commissioner has asked the public of Queensland.

Mr. PAYNE: What do you think of them?

Mr. CORSER: It is for the Government to answer.

Mr. PAYNE: I ask you.

Mr. CORSER: The Commissioner should know and should be able to answer these questions, and the Minister should be able to back them up instead of asking Parliament these questions. That is the ridiculousness of the position.

Mr. CARTER: Do you think we should pay a lower wage?

Mr. CORSER: It is for the Government to say, and not for them to ask me whether they should pay a lower wage or not. The railways should be run on business lines, and the award rates paid.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why are they not paying?

Mr. CORSER: Simply because of that disease that has got into the service which is backed up by political influence and which is going to drag men down—drag down the result of their labour and prevent them from doing that which is just to the community.

Mr. CARTER: Do you believe in increased freights?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member is not going to draw me that way. The Government were wrong in increasing freights. The question should be considered from a business standpoint. We should see that this State enterprise, this great asset that Queensland has, is run in a businesslike way and that it should be made to pay.

Mr. COLLINS: What do you mean by "businesslike"?

Mr. CORSER: We should cut out political influence; we should cut out vote catching, and we should make the Commissioner carry out that business in a manner that would be a credit to the country, and not allow him to ask Parliament, through its Minister, the very questions that Parliament wants him to decide. Those are the questions that have been asked, and I have been asked what this party would do. We say that it is for the Government to tackle its own problems. We should see that the Commissioner is able to, and has power to, carry out this business concern in the interests of the people of the State, and the Government know perfectly well and the railway employees know well that they do not intend to cut out the services of

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a number of railway employees; they do not intend to retrench a number of railway employees until the elections are over.

Mr. WEIR: Do you want them to?

Mr. CORSER: When the elections are over, God help those people and their families, considering the terrible trouble that they are letting themselves in for. These railway employees have confidence in a Government that is prepared to run the railways in a businesslike way and be prepared to meet their obligations and not be prepared to cut these railway servants adrift because of bad management.

Mr. WEIR interjected.

Mr. CORSER: We heard the hon. member cackling last night, and he gave an exhibition of what is told to the people, what is told to their friends who will not read anything but the Labour Press. It would do some of them good to read what is termed the Tory Press to-day. We are told that the present Opposition is out to do everything to cut down the worker and to take away his present condition, whereas we are out to run our concerns in a businesslike way so that we can abide by the awards that have been made. We will be able to pay them according to what we believe is right and according to what is decided by the Arbitration Court, and, if possible, better their conditions from time to time as well as give them increases and pay for them. The railways should be made to pay. Drastic changes are necessary in the administration of the Railway Department.

Mr. WEIR: Let us know where.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member evidently is pinpricked in his mind. Very carefully they ask: In what direction are these changes to be made? They have appointed a Royal Commission, and that commission is taking evidence from day to day. If you read the evidence you will ask yourself: Are they getting at the kernel of the situation? When they examine a witness the witness is asked: "Is the water from such-and-such a dam likely to rust the tubes of this particular boiler?" Those are the questions that are being asked. Those are the investigations that are being made by this Labour commission. They are asking all sorts of questions to cloak up that which they consider in their own minds to be the nucleus of the trouble.

Mr. GUNN: The hon. member for Brisbane said he could save a quarter of a million.

Mr. CORSER: He could save some of it if he did not go to the expense of sitting on that commission. Hon. members opposite are afraid something will be said about the real reason for the trouble in the Railway Department before the elections. I will venture to say what is the trouble. Hon. members know what is the trouble. The Commissioner, by his questions, knows what is the trouble. These inquiring gentlemen know what is the trouble; the Government of New South Wales know what was the trouble when the railway servants there came out on strike rather than try a system found necessary.

Mr. WEIR again interjected.

Mr. CORSER: I will certainly support that which the Government of New South Wales found necessary. It would have been far better for those men in New South

Wales, who were afraid of the card system, to have given it a trial, and then, later on, have stated their objections to it. The Railway Commissioner and the Government know where to put their fingers on the trouble in Ipswich, and in Brisbane to a greater degree, but the hon. gentlemen are frightened to touch it, because this political disease has got into the kernel of the political situation in Queensland to-day. What do we find they have done? The hon. member for Maryborough referred to a gatekeeper who might be reduced under our legislation. What evidence have they? They made an award recently for the gatekeepers in the whole of the railway service. And—will you believe it—a gatekeeper who receives 15s. per week is not to receive the increased award of the court simply because she is not a member of the union, and she has received a certain time in which to become a member of the union on her 15s. per week and with her little youngsters to keep. Will the hon. member deny it?

Mr. WEIR: No, I do not deny it.

Mr. CORSER: Is not that a scandalous state of affairs? There you have the admission of one of those—I was going to say whose mouths are so wide open—but who use so many words in their endeavours to belittle the Opposition and their efforts to better the conditions of the people who are called upon to keep their political organisations financial and do the impossible out of the earnings of 15s. per week of a woman who is keeping a gatehouse in the country.

Mr. WEIR: Is that the same woman who received 5s. per week under your Government?

Mr. CORSER: I do not know a woman who received 5s. per week. Last night the same hon. member said that a gatekeeper in the city of Maryborough, represented by the hon. member for Wide Bay, was receiving 5s. There is no gatekeeper in the city of Maryborough, and there has not been. That is in keeping with the rest of his statements. I think that is sufficient proof that he is pretty hard put to it to find excuses to decry the Opposition. It is clear that all these statements are made in an endeavour to collect some moss with a view to bringing about a continuance in office of the Government who harass the individual who is doing his duty to the country by seizing the frozen meat that the people in the bush got from Gympie, by taking all the butter to Melbourne, by the acquisition of ships, by interfering with our coalmines, by interfering with our sugar-works, by interfering in every direction. They are trying to cover up their tracks by giving the people's money, under an award, to a section of the community—who, no doubt, might be well entitled to it—(Government laughter)—that is what hon. members do not like—that I say they might be entitled to it. The question is whether we are assisting the people in the country districts also in the best possible manner with the money at our disposal.

Another question that was raised last night was the payment to foster-mothers. During last financial year the Government reduced the assistance given to many foster-mothers in the State of Queensland and to many natural mothers. In my district I have one individual who has been reduced, and to-day that natural mother receives for her two

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children not more than 10s. per week. She is a resident of Gayndah. I do not know how she votes, but that might account for it.

Mr. COLLINS: Can you prove it?

Mr. CORSER: I can find the proof for the hon. member or any other hon. member at any time.

Mr. WEIR: Did you cite the case to the Minister?

Mr. CORSER: I cited the case previously in the House and to the department. That mother has been reduced to 10s. per week for two children, and this is the great Government that is doing so much for the foster-mothers! It is claimed that because a natural mother is receiving to-day as much as a foster-mother, who previously had been receiving more, that was a slur on the past Government. What they did was to give the foster-mother a little bit more than the natural mother, because they paid the compliment to the natural mother of believing that out of her love for her child she would do that bit more at least for which the foster-mother was paid. All that the present Government have done is to raise—not the foster-mother, not the mother who has to pay for the increase of living—but merely the natural mother up to the rate of the foster-mother. The foster-mothers have got no increased assistance from the present Government.

Mr. CARTER: Yes; they got 1s. per child.

Mr. CORSER: I am going to qualify that. Is the increase proportionate to the increases that the railway workers have had? The Commissioner, in his report on the Mount Cannindah line, says that owing to the increase to the railway workers—

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: You made a deliberate misstatement.

Mr. CORSER: I will prove it. The Railway Commissioner, in his report on the Mount Cannindah line—(Government interjections)—Close half that mouth and give us a chance, half of it will do—The Commissioner says that the wages have been increased by the award by 27 per cent. The "Industrial Gazette" says that they were increased because of the cost of living. I ask the Government whether the foster-mothers, by an increase of 1s. per child, have received an increase of 27 per cent. to meet the increased cost of living? These mothers are widows for the most part. They have but one vote in the family, and the Government know perfectly well that before these kids, these little ones, grow up they will be wiped off the political system altogether. They want the woman's vote—they have no use for the child—and where there is a mother and a father, a gullible father at that, as the Minister for Agriculture would put it, they will give him an increase, they will toady to him, improve his conditions, give him timber cheaply, and provide him with motor-cars and railway fares free, if he is a representative of a union coming to Brisbane. But if it is a representative of the Farmers' Union who wants to leave Brisbane, does he have written on his carriage, "This carriage is reserved for Mr. So-and-so"? I know, for instance, a carriage was reserved for one of these conservative supporters or representatives of the Labour Government, who are here as representatives at various conferences, who tout round the districts as organisers, who

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come here as representatives of the railway or other unions, and are provided at the cost of this Railway Department that is running amuck, with a free pass and comforts that are denied to the returned soldier from France. (Government interjections.) Will the hon. member deny that the railway union organisers that come here on deputations, or on their dirt commissions, or their dirt increased pay requests, have not passes and are conveyed first class on the railways?

Mr. WEIR: You talk about a reserved compartment. Stick to your guns.

Mr. CORSER: I will stick to my guns. The hon. member is not going to deny that they get first class carriages for a start. (Government laughter.)

Mr. WEIR: Can you give us any names?

Mr. CORSER: I will give the name of the gentleman who was provided with a first class carriage, and that name is that of Mr. Beecham, of Maryborough.

Mr. WEIR: That is not true.

Mr. CORSER: And his name was placarded on the train. The hon. member says it is not true, but that does not constitute it not a fact. I want to say that I was not the only man who could see it, and because I had no carriage myself I got into that gentleman's compartment reserved for him.

Mr. WEIR: It could not have been reserved, or you would not have been allowed in.

Mr. CORSER: And Mr. Beecham will know that it was reserved for him, and he travelled in it, and so did I. The first proof I will give the hon. member will be Mr. Beecham's own word—he can ask him for a start. If Mr. Beecham denies it, I will get other proof.

Mr. WEIR: I will believe Mr. Beecham, but I will not believe you.

Mr. CORSER: I quite believe it; the hon. member's mind is not built that way.

Mr. WEIR: Will you give us the date?

Mr. CORSER: I will give you the date. The hon. member made one more statement that I am going to answer. The railway delegates might be entitled to their first class carriage: we will put it that way. How much more is a returned soldier entitled to a first class carriage? While that railway delegate is travelling in a sleeping-car free on these indebted railways, the returned Anzac, the soldier from France, the crippled man, the deaf man, is travelling second class, and that is why I complain of the political comforts that are provided for these people. Now, I think I have answered the various questions that hon. members have come along with.

Mr. WEIR: You have not given that date you promised me.

Mr. CORSER: I do not carry every date in my head.

Mr. WEIR: Make it the 1st of April; it will do.

Mr. CORSER: The 1st of April was the day you were born.

Mr. WEIR: No, the day you make all your statements. When are you going to prove that other statement you made about the Queensland Railway Union?

Mr. CORSER: I will prove every statement regarding the Queensland Railway Union, and I do not cackle at that. I have given the name of the gentleman, and I trust to his honour that he will answer correctly. (Government laughter and interjections.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members on my right to refrain from further interjections. I do not mind an occasional interjection, but I cannot suffer a series of them.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: The next business is to do with a remarkable franchise, a rotten system, a rotten electoral law, that provides for the duplicating and triplicating of the votes, and provides that no man—never mind what constituency he may come from—nor the whole of the constituency can take from the roll the name of the man which should not be there.

Mr. WEIR: Did you say a "rotten roll"?

Mr. CORSER: I said a rotten system. I did not refer to the Maryborough roll. The present electoral law has also brought into vogue an undesirable state [5 p.m.] of affairs in regard to absent votes. For some months past we have been trying to get from the old country a return of the absent votes given by our soldiers, and if the same system is going to be carried out at the next election, I should like to know when we shall be able to discover what candidate is elected for Parliament and what candidate is defeated. If we are not going to receive the votes given by the soldiers until a remote date after the election, we shall not know for some time what candidate has been elected. Many members on the other side have stated from time to time that 50,000 of the young people of Queensland have left the State and are fighting at the front. Yet we find that only 1,200 votes have been received from the soldiers. Does that not strike you as something very curious? Repeatedly during this debate members opposite have tried to frame for themselves reasons why our finances are not in a better position, and why productiveness has diminished instead of increased; and they use the argument that 50,000 of our men have left the country. Yet, as I have already pointed out, the soldiers' votes which have been counted number only 1,200.

Mr. WEIR: You are like the niggers in the "Herald."

Mr. CORSER: It is a pity you were not on your own island. It is one of the hon. member's own friends who ran and owned the "Herald." I will give the hon. member an opportunity of making that statement somewhere else, where he will have a chance of proving it.

Mr. WEIR: It is in the library.

Mr. CORSER: I saw what was in the library, but I hope you will make the statement where you will have an opportunity of proving it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I will ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair, and not keep up a cross-fire of interjections.

Mr. CORSER: I hope you will call to order the hon. member who interjects. If hon. members make statements to me across the Chamber, and I do not get the protection of the Chair, I am not going to stand the Chair tackling me.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have said more than once that it is disorderly to interject, and that it is also disorderly to answer interjections. I ask the hon. member to address his remarks to the Chair all the time.

Mr. CORSER: Well, we are both offenders, and I hope you will sometimes stop the interjector. I was saying that we have been told that 50,000 men have gone away from the country, and yet only 1,200 votes have been received from the soldiers. We are told by members opposite that those 50,000 men are wealth producers, and that they are now fighting for the Empire. How is it, then, that only 1,200 soldiers' votes have been counted by the department?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Some of the soldiers are sick.

Mr. CORSER: I know that some of them are sick, and that some of the votes from Egypt are supposed to have been lost. Hon. members opposite talk about the sick soldiers, and yet they are taking away from sick men and sick women the opportunity to vote. I hope there will be a change in the present condition of affairs. The time has come when the country should have its say in the Government—when the front benches in this Chamber should be occupied by representatives of the country electorates, when we should have a country party forming the Government, who will give the country people a fair deal, such as they have not had in the past. Never in the history of Queensland have we had a more unfair state of affairs than exists at the present time. It is time that an opportunity was given to the one section of the community who up to the present have not had a fair deal, to show what is necessary in the interests of the country. It is time that we did away with the petty systems and schemes of the Government for vote-catching and for serving the interest of one section only.

Mr. McPHAIL: You and your friends are good at vote-catching.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member and his party—I beg your pardon, Mr. Foley—I am not allowed to answer interjections. In order to bring about what is necessary we must give encouragement to a section of the people who have not had encouragement up to the present time and provide the facilities and comforts that are necessary for them. It is necessary for us to decide whether we are going to continue the policy of making the people of the country the milch cow on every occasion, or whether we are going to give them their fair dues and put them first, because that is where they ought to be. The gain of the primary producer is no man's loss, and the opportunity to make that gain is available to every man, whether Labour or any other. Every man has an opportunity to go on the land if he is prepared to produce wealth by his own industry and efforts; but the man on the land has not had a fair deal in the past. We should give him an opportunity now of saying how the country is going to be run. It must be generally recognised that this most valuable asset of the country is not receiving the sympathy it ought to receive. When we recognise that a closer knowledge of their requirements is absolutely essential to properly govern the country we shall recognise what is best in their interests and in the interests of the whole State. I sincerely

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hope that the present Administration, in their desire to increase taxation and to go on increasing expenditure, will recognise that there is a greater Government looking after the destinies of the people of Australia, and that they want some taxable asset from which they can raise revenue, and that the field of taxation should not be altogether exploited by the State exploiters. We should be prepared to leave available for them every penny we can leave, so that they may have money for the better prosecution of the war. We should remember that seventeen of our transports and a hospital ship are held up, and that every endeavour is being made to hold up the country, and yet the Government of Queensland, who ought to represent the people of the State, are acting for the advantage of one section of the community and to the detriment of the Federal Government, who require every penny they can get for war purposes.

Mr. FREE (*South Brisbane*): I wish to say a few words on the Financial Statement. I took notes of a few remarks made by the hon. member who has just sat down, and I notice that he referred to the votes received from the soldiers. When reading the paper the other day I saw a little bit about the Port Curtis method of catching votes. A gentleman travelling about the district spoke about the debt on the public hall, and said he would be pleased to pay off the £50 debt which remained on that hall.

Mr. CORSER: Hear, hear!

Mr. FREE: He is, I believe, a future candidate for that electorate. The reason we did not get more votes from the soldiers is that the Government did not stoop to the low tactics of buying votes. I have no doubt that if the Ryan Government stooped to the low tactics of the Federal National Government, they would have got more votes. I do not intend to detain the House more than a few minutes, because there are only two departments that I wish to touch upon briefly. To my mind, they are the most important departments of the Government. I refer to the Health Department and the Education Department. I should like to have seen provision made this year for a separate Department of Health and a Minister of Health. We have heard a lot about the State children, orphanages, hospitals, the blind institutions, venereal diseases, etc. All of these institutions should be under a Minister who can give all his time to those departments. I feel sure that this or any Government that may come into power will never be able to effectually deal with the Health Department as long as it is attached to the Home Secretary's Department, because that department, with the police, local authorities, and a hundred and one things to attend to, is altogether too cumbersome for any man to manage, and the result is that the Health Department, which should be the most important, is looked upon as a secondary consideration. I am convinced that the most important work of a Government is first the health of the people, then the education of the people; but unless the health of the people is looked after, all other legislation is useless, especially now that we are face to face with this terrible disease. Hitherto the public and politicians have not been courageous enough to break through the mock modesty which surrounds the subject. I am pleased to see that right

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throughout Australia to-day the public mind is being awakened to the great danger which is threatened to the community through this disease. No doubt, the outbreak of the war and the great danger to our soldiers from this disease has, to a great extent, awakened public interest, and certainly some broad-minded policy, which could be more effectively dealt with by a separate department, must be adopted. The Select Committee which sat in New South Wales brought out some startling facts. We have found out that from 80 to 90 per cent. of the cases of general paralysis of the insane are caused by venereal disease. Medical experts from the women's hospital have told us that venereal disease was responsible for 99 per cent. of the still-born children, that most of the cases of blindness in children at birth has been due to gonorrhoea in the father or mother, and that hip disease in children, and mental dulness in children, are caused by venereal disease. Seeing that our population is only 681,302, and knowing how easy it is for this disease to be widely disseminated by a few, it is all-important that the Government should act fearlessly, firmly, and quickly. While only a few have the disease to-day, it may not be long before 60 or 70 per cent. of the community will be affected.

Many experts who gave evidence before the Royal Commission said that it was safe to say that 25 per cent. of the people of Australia are suffering from venereal disease, or from the effects of it. Those figures are startling, and prove that we require a Government in the Commonwealth, and also in the State, ready and willing to take drastic action. I maintain that the best way for this State to take action is to establish a separate Health Department and a Minister of health who can give his full time to that department. I should also like to see placed on the Education Estimates a large sum of money in order that our youths about to leave school may be instructed in the dangers which face them when they go into the outer world, and also instructed how to cure themselves. I maintain that knowledge is the best weapon to meet this disease; and if our youths go out into the world with no knowledge of how to treat themselves or no knowledge of the disease, then they delay in going to their medical practitioner through ignorance; and, if we can have some system whereby young men going out into the world are properly trained and taught how to treat themselves in the first stages, I am sure it would have beneficial results. I very much regret that the Government is near the end of office and this department has not been established; but I do hope that when this Government comes back—or whatever Government comes into power—they will make this one of their first objects—to see that this State has a proper Minister for health and a separate Health Department. Now, I have referred to the education of the young fellows going out into the world.

I wish now, briefly, to touch on the Education Department. The Education Department shows an increase of £85,939. I have no intention of criticising the Government for the amount of money that they have spent, as shown in their Financial Statement, because I maintain that, with this great war which is on and with the attempt which has been made by the employing class to throw men out of work and force them to the front, the Government were right in employing as

many men as they possibly could and thus preventing unemployment in our cities or our country, and preventing a trouble which otherwise would have been caused through the want of the necessaries of life. I find that the bulk of this increase is to raise the salaries of the teachers. These increases were well merited. The teachers had been very patient and long-suffering in respect of their salaries previously. The Government has recognised that the future of the State depends very largely upon its educational system, and such salaries should be paid to the teaching staff as will attract to the service the cream of our boys and girls. In my remarks on the Address in Reply, I referred to the fact that the success of the Australians in the present war was largely due to the efficient system of education prevailing in Australia. This fact has been once more demonstrated by the magnificent success which the Australians have achieved in the recent British pushes in Flanders.

I note, with regret, the vote for medical and dental inspection shows a decrease of £600. It is recognised that the decrease is due to the fact that, for military reasons, the Government has been unable to pursue its vigorous policy of medical and dental inspection. It is essential to the wellbeing of the State that we should have a strong and lusty people, and one of the best ways to ensure that desired end is to protect in every way the welfare of our school pupils. It is sincerely to be hoped that, when normal conditions prevail, the Government will see to it that the medical and dental work of the Department of Public Instruction is extended in every possible way and made one of the most important services of the department. In passing, I would just like to say that a great amount of money could be saved in regard to medical and dental inspection if there was a proper Health Department, and the medical man going round examining the children in the different schools were an officer of the Health Department. There is not the slightest doubt that he could act in that capacity for the Health Department while visiting the different schools, and thus save a good deal of money to the State.

I note also, with regret, that the vote for the Pharmacy College has been slightly reduced, the reduction being £150. It is quite recognised that the reduction of the vote is due to the fact that owing to the large number of the students of the college who are on military service the fees received have not been so great as previously, and consequently the amount of endowment which could be claimed is not so large. I would point out that the Pharmacy College is doing exceedingly useful work, and is, in fact, an indispensable institution in the training of pharmaceutical chemists, and I hope that, should the amount be found inadequate for the current year, the Government will deal sympathetically with the committee and see that the usefulness of the institution is not destroyed in any way through lack of adequate financial support. I might also say that the dental profession is depending on this college for the training of their young men in their second year for the intermediate examinations. When the University was started in Brisbane it was intended to embrace the training of pharmaceutical chemists, but owing to the fact that they had such a splendid college here and to the shortage of funds, they found it was not necessary for the time being. It would be

a disastrous thing to Queensland if that Pharmaceutical College was lost—and there is a danger of its being lost to Queensland, because the funds are so low and there are so few students this year.

Now, in regard to secondary education, I wish to commend the Government for its efforts to extend the system of secondary education as widely as possible, and express the hope once more that when additional institutions for secondary purposes are being provided, the claims of South Brisbane be not overlooked. Now, Sir, we have heard a good deal of squealing from the councillors and the trustees of the South Brisbane Park about the piece of land that has been selected there; but, strange to say, these gentlemen have not been squealing about the fact that the Minister for Railways gave them 100 feet by 12 feet at the corner of Grey and Melbourne streets this week in order to widen their street. The same gentlemen have accepted this gift from the Railway Department and the Ryan Government without one word of thanks appearing in the papers or anywhere else. Also, a few weeks ago a kindergarten school was started in an adjacent electorate to mine, and the Government there very kindly transferred to them a piece of land from the railway reserve for that kindergarten school. Notwithstanding that the Ryan Government are doing this, we don't hear one word about it from the same lot of councillors who are opposing the Government for taking away a piece of land which, for years and years, they have not seen fit to utilise. The piece of ground in the park to which I refer is a hill and a hole which they have not been using for many years. There have been letters in the papers commenting on the use to which it has been put. There have been the cases before the court—the nature of which I don't wish to refer to at the present time—of a beastly nature of things which have taken place on this piece of ground that the South Brisbane councillors are squealing about like a singed tomcat because the Government are taking it in order to put it to a useful purpose. I hope the Government will go on with their determination to build the school in that position, for it is absolutely the best position in South Brisbane; it is between the two stations, and there is a tramline going down each side of it. Notwithstanding the fact that they are squealing about this piece of ground being taken, the best part of their park is locked up for their own friends for croquet grounds, etc., and they have them all fenced off with barbed wire, etc., as I mentioned in my speech on the Address in Reply. They are not fenced off for the benefit of the school children or the poor people—the working people—but for the benefit of the favoured few. I guarantee that if a socialistic club in South Brisbane were to ask the same councillors and the same trustees for a small piece of ground on which to have a tennis court, they would find there was not room; too much of the room already has been taken up by their friends. I hope that the Minister for Education will be determined to go on with his previous decision and build the school there.

Touching the Queensland University, I wish to stress once more the desirableness of the establishment of a chair of medicine and of dentistry. This policy will dovetail into the policy previously initiated regarding medical and dental inspection of school children. I

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sincerely hope that the Government, as soon as financial conditions will admit, will see that the University is endowed in a liberal spirit, so that adequate salaries may be paid to the teaching staff, and thus an efficient staff will be secured for, and maintained in, the University. Unless that is done, the more efficient members of the staff will leave for other Universities; and if the Queensland University service is a poorly paid one, the University will only be able to attract to its service men of third-rate standing—and such a policy would react most disastrously upon the University itself. In mentioning about this chair of medicine, I would like to say that it would not be so expensive as some would imagine; because under the chair of medicine we could bring the chair of dentistry, chemists, and opticians; because a certain amount of medical training is required for every one of those professions, and the same professor who is lecturing for medicine could take certain days and lecture to the different other professions and thus save a good deal of expense.

In the matter of technical education, I note with pleasure that notwithstanding the prevailing financial shortage the Government have been able to increase the vote for technical education by nearly £3,000. An efficient system of technical education is indispensable to Queensland. The results of the current war have abundantly demonstrated that the winning of the war will largely depend upon engineering and science. It has demonstrated also that engineering and science will play a most important part in the future in all the commercial and national activities which will follow the declaration of peace. An efficient system of technical education is essential to the proper training of craftsmen and general workers; and the technical colleges may, in a measure, be regarded as the institutions of the people. I hope that the developments in regard to technical education in Queensland will proceed on sound lines; that the system will be strengthened, and made one of the bulwarks of our education system generally. I am pleased to find that the facilities in the technical colleges, particularly the Central Technical College, are being used so largely in the training of returned soldiers.

I think that the Ryan Government are on the right track when they spend as much money as they can in the education of the coming population of Queensland. I am satisfied that all the measures that any Government may pass—all the palliative, all the stop-gap measures for the time being, are never going to be any good to the masses unless we have advancement in our educational system. I have heard plenty of our friends say—one man said to me, "Why, what are you talking about? Education! The reason why we cannot get servants is that the people are too well educated." I can readily understand those who wish to grind their fellow men down to the last point—just giving them sufficient to keep body and soul together—not wanting to see the masses well educated; but I, as one of the representatives of the masses, want to see education from the ABC to the end of the University, free; the only payment should be that the boy should exhibit brains, and intellect enough to grasp the training and pass the examinations in order to pass on. Many men I have heard offer the argument that under the educational system of Queensland to-day, every boy—the poorest

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in the land—has an equal opportunity. I say that that is a deliberate lie, and they know it. A boy may be brilliant, and by studying early in the morning and late at night manage to be successful in winning a scholarship. But what do we find? As soon as he passes along to the grammar school, we find that the expenses of the scholars are so great in regard to club money, sports, etc., that all his comrades are well dressed with tailor-made clothes; that if his poor mother, who is going out to work to earn her livelihood, gets the money for his books, it is impossible for her to dress him the same as the other boys. It is impossible for her to provide him with pocket money for this sport and that sport, and the consequence is the little fellow feels like a fish out of water. He is miserable and glad to get out of the school. If we had plenty of secondary schools established, and provided some remuneration to assist the parents to support their children during their studies, some of the brightest and most brilliant lads would be found and kept as teachers in the department where they would be of use to this State, whereas at the present time they are lost to the State through the unhappy circumstances of life. Take the secondary education of those who have not won scholarships. The expenses are so heavy that it is impossible for a working man to educate his child up to matriculation standard. The fees alone are £5 15s. per quarter. Then a lad must have his pocket money, he must dress the same as the other boys, otherwise he would be miserable. How is it possible for any man earning the magnificent sum of £3 or £3 10s. a week—which our friends say is too much for a working man—how is it possible for such a man with four or five children to give his children the same advantages that some of us are able to give? It is absolutely impossible, and, therefore, I hope the education system of Queensland will be improved and that it will be made easier for boys to get a higher education than it is at the present time. I would also like to say in regard to the professional men of Queensland, that the educational standard as provided in the Dental Act passed the other day is exactly similar to the standard that prevailed in Victoria when I was a young man twenty years of age, which is over twenty-five years ago. Therefore, we have just managed, through the present Ryan Government, to bring that profession up to the same standard that it was in Victoria twenty-five years ago, and yet they tell us how advanced we are in our educational system. Exactly the same thing applies in regard to pharmaceutical chemists and their college. If this college is lost to Brisbane it will be a very serious thing indeed to those professions. I will give you a little experience in regard to a professional man practising in our midst. This case came under my notice since I have been President of the Dental Board. This man had been practising for years, and when he went up for examination he was asked—

"In making an injection what percentage of cocaine would you inject?"

He replied—

"I do not know."

He was asked—

"What percentage of cocaine would be dangerous?"

He replied—

"I do not know."

He was asked—

“What would you do if you had a patient suffering from some disease and it was necessary to administer cocaine to save the patient?”

He replied—

“I do not know. I would try to save the patient.”

He was asked—

“What drug would you administer as an antidote?”

He replied—

“I do not know.”

That was the standard of training of professional men in Brisbane in the past. I say it was a damnable disgrace that such men should have been allowed to practise, as they were nothing less than a danger to public life. A man or woman never knows when they go into a place like that whether they will ever come out alive. There have been a few deaths in Queensland, and I can readily understand it. I do not blame that man, but I blame the late Government of Queensland for allowing such a state of things to exist. Instead of having these men properly educated in a proper college and compelling them to pass an examination before a board before they were allowed to practise, they have been allowed to practise without proper training, and the public have had to take the risk. That is one of the reasons why I am so anxious to see a chair of medicine established at the University. Another reason is this: At the present time, if I could put my hands on two or three young Queenslanders fully qualified, I could put them into positions at 25s. a day, yet we have young men here who cannot get regular work at 10s. or 12s. a day. I know of two or three positions vacant at the present time, but we cannot get young men in the dental profession. When we wanted to get a man for our dental hospital we had to send to Melbourne. That is the position as it exists in Queensland to-day, and yet the standard of the profession has only just advanced to what it is in the other States. If we could get a chair of medicine and dentistry established in the University here it would save a lot of expense to young men in their training. At the present time a young man is compelled to go to the dental hospital in Sydney or in the old country if he wishes to get a diploma that would be recognised in any other State. The certificate given in Queensland is not recognised anywhere else, for the reason that the standard is very low and there is no reciprocity—and quite right, too. For these reasons I am very anxious to see a chair of medicine established in the University and I hope it will soon be established for the benefit of the young men of Queensland, and also for the benefit of Queensland generally.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In a Parliament such as ours, which has no foreign affairs to deal with, it always seems to me that the discussion on the Financial Statement really outweighs in importance the debate on the Address in Reply at the beginning of the session. In all our functions we are limited strictly to the development of our own resources and Queensland affairs. As far as the Government programme at the beginning of the session is concerned, it is largely a promissory-note of what is intended to be done, or what it is hoped will be done, and what it is hoped will accrue from such

actions if carried into effect. On the Financial Statement we come right down to our true business. After all, our ability to make Queensland prosperous—to make the best use of those large national advantages with which we are endowed—depends largely upon finance; upon whether we have the money or not, and whether our credit is good. We may talk as much as we like, and promise as much as we like: we may talk of “high falutin” humanitarian views, but, after all, unless we have the means at our disposal, it is only talk and nothing more. In referring to the Financial Statement that we have before us, one of the first things that strikes one is that we have a deficit of over £250,000 in connection with last year's transactions; and that next year it is estimated that our deficit will be £500,000. Secondly, it is estimated that our expenditure for the current year will exceed that of the past year by over £600,000; and, at the same time, our taxation during the past year has increased by over £103,000. One would really think that at such a time as this the Government would economise—it is far easier to do so with an expanding revenue than with a decreasing revenue—yet, despite the expanding revenue, the forecast is that next year we will be still further behind. Another matter that strikes one very forcibly is that our principal public utility—the railways—which under recent Governments has paid its way, and sometimes a little over, is now being worked at a loss of over £700,000 a year. In view of all that, there is good ground for considerable diffidence as to the future. After all, the only real relief that can come to Queensland is through producing more. It is no use depending upon borrowed money, although, as a matter of fact, I understand the Government intend to get relief from their present temporary difficulties by issuing short-dated debentures. At the present time the Government are actually borrowing money to pay for the year's expenses. At one time, when the present Government were on the Opposition benches, if such a proposition as that had been mooted, there would have been a howl of execration. This is one of the promissory-notes that have not been honoured. We were told when they took charge of the Treasury benches that we should have a reign of sound finance. In fact, the Treasurer at one time told us that he would build his railways out of revenue, and now, when he has control of affairs, not only has he to depend upon loan money to build railways, but he has to depend on loan money for the payment of his yearly expenses. I certainly think in that regard that the promissory-note has not been honoured. This again forces home on us that the only solution of our financial difficulties is to produce more.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER interjected.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am speaking under difficulties. I think it will be recognised that never before have I asked the assistance of the Chair. I have always been able to hold my own. However, suffering as I am from a heavy cold, I would ask hon. members to do the same as I do when they are speaking, and to refrain from undue interjections. The only way to overcome our financial difficulties is to produce more; to encourage those who are willing to develop our resources, and those who are prepared to put their capital into the various industrial enterprises, but at the present time the position in that regard is a most distressing one. We find there is a general reluctance

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to do anything of the kind. People are averse to risking anything, and there is a general distrust of this Government all through the State. Not only through this State, but if you go to the Southern States you find the same feeling of distrust there. On every debate on the Financial Statement I have taken as my topic the cost of production and the means of reducing our imports, and as far as possible supplying ourselves with what we need and increasing our exports. After all, on what do we depend for the money to pay the interest on our loans but upon the proceeds of what we send out of the country. And again, the amount that we have so to meet is rendered less by every additional line of local manufacture that we take into our own hands, and which renders us so very much more independent of other countries outside of Australia. Yet, we find that the cost of production is increasing by leaps and bounds. During the last day or two we have had a report on a railway by the Commissioner—on the Mount Cannindah line—and we find that whereas the original estimate of the cost of that line was about £400,000, that amount has now been increased to about £470,000 because of the increased labour cost alone. That is an instance in which the cost of production has increased, and we have to remember that we can only get the necessary lines of railways by having them constructed economically, at any rate, at reasonable cost. The same thing applies to other industries.

Here is another instance, in a very small way—although it is said that a straw shows which way the wind blows—which indicates the difficulties with which our producers have to deal. It is a cutting from a Mackay paper with reference to the shipping of fruit from Bowen, and is dated 26th September of this year—

“The only communication Bowen has with Gladstone is by the steamer ‘Bingera.’ As a steamer calls at Bowen the night previous to the arrival of the ‘Bingera,’ however, to load cargo for the South, there is no cargo to go by the mail boat. Under the waterside award no wharf lumpers can be called upon to work for less than two hours, and a manager cannot put on less than a gang of four men. A local resident wanted to send a case of tomatoes to a friend in Gladstone, but to lift this 28 lb. box on to the steamer would require a gang of four men for two hours! The anomaly of the position is heightened by the fact that the resident is not permitted to load the box on the steamer himself, consequently the tomatoes could not be shipped.”

That is a fair indication of the fool awards which are making the cost of production so excessive in Australia, which are hampering us in our efforts to increase production, which are hindering us in our endeavours to supply our own needs. Those two instances cover a wide range—from the large sum involved in the cost of railway construction to the small sum needed to get produce to market, but betwixt and between them will be found the whole gamut of the difficulties, so to speak, with which the producer in Australia has to deal at the present time. This high cost of work is debarring people from going on the land, and is deterring the producers from putting land under the plough. Members may come to this Chamber and

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talk as learnedly as they like of the need to encourage the production of cotton. I have pointed out, time and again, the hundreds of thousands of pounds that could be kept in Queensland if we could encourage the production of many other tropical crops besides cotton: but, after all, underlying the whole thing is the cost of production, which, in Australia, is becoming so excessive that it is impossible for us to supply ourselves. We are becoming more dependent than ever on the importer, and we are allowing opportunities to supply ourselves to go by. I think that during the last three or four years there has been brought forcibly home to the nations of the world the risk a nation runs when it depends on outsiders for the supply of the necessaries of life.

But the increased cost of production is only a secondary matter to one with which we are confronted in the way of industrial trouble at the present time. I feel safe in saying that the great obstacle in the way of enterprise and development at the present time in Australia is the rampant, tyrannical unionism that is now developing. It has become the great question of the day, and it has brought to light one of the great defects in the Government programme submitted at the beginning of the session—that is, the lack of some effective means of preventing strikes. We have lost more during the last two years in Queensland than ever before in our history through strikes, and it is largely through the remissness of the present Administration. When they took office we had certain safeguards, and strikes were almost unknown in Queensland. They removed those safeguards. They opened the door, they threw down the rails to the trouble we are now suffering from, and the result has been untold loss not only to the producer, not only to the employer, but also to the wage-earner and the members of the unions themselves. I would like to point out that, in spite of the fact that we have industrial tribunals established at considerable expense for the purpose of dealing in a constitutional manner with every grievance they may have, direct action is still the order of the day throughout Australia, and is causing loss to us all round. In reference to this shipping difficulty, I notice a big effort is being made to throw the blame on to the wrong shoulders, and I think it is only common justice that those who are to blame should shoulder it. I have here the “Daily Standard” of yesterday, containing a statement made by Mr. C. Burke, the President of the Federated Seamen’s Union of Australia, who is also secretary of the Queensland Branch of that union. He said—

“He was there that evening to give a report of affairs connected with the strike in the Southern States, its origin, and the manner in which the Seamen’s Union came to be affected and drawn into the maelstrom. In the latter part of the month of July, certain disagreements arose in the New South Wales Railway Department, with the men employed in the workshops, which, after repeated efforts to settle on behalf of the men, led to an upheaval which brought in its train a great deal of suffering and ended in the men of the Railway Department being forced, through starvation and other causes, to accept defeat, and return to work on the Government’s terms.”

"The trouble arose over the introduction of the Taylor card system, an American system of costing and speeding up, which had for its object the ultimate elimination of the old workers or the slow workers."

I may say that I disagree with Mr. Burke there; but at the same time I quoted it in full, because, taking it on the whole, he has given a very fair history of the whole case.

"So much has been said and written about this subject that there is now no need for me to stress the point further. After the struggle had been entered upon the unions concerned called together a committee of the various unions affected for the purpose of controlling the trouble, and, notwithstanding the advice tendered by this body to various unions, that the trouble should be confined to the railways"—

That was the advice of the more responsible men among them—

"other unions took up the matter and decided to enter the fight. Amongst the number was the Sydney Waterside Workers' Union, who sent an ultimatum to the Government that, unless the card system objected to by the railway men were withdrawn in twenty-four hours, their union would immediately down tools. This threat seemed to have no effect, and the members of this union, after the expiry of the twenty-four hours, ceased work in spite of the repeated efforts of the strike committee to confine the dispute within certain prescribed limits. The members of our own union then became uneasy at the prospect of having to work with the 'loyalists,' and decided to come out before they were asked to do so, the ill-advised action of the waterside men precipitating the trouble on to the shoulders of the seamen, who, to all intents and purposes, could in no way affect the railwaymen. However, having once entered upon the struggle, in defiance of the executive officers of the union, there remained nothing but to see the matter through to its final end, no matter what the consequences might be.

"Though the union had nothing to gain, we decided we would stick to the other unions who were engaged in the struggle. This we carried out, until all hope was lost of a victory for anyone who was connected with the struggle, and, in conjunction with the other unions engaged in the transport industry of the State of New South Wales, we carried out a fight on behalf of the Waterside Union and the miners, which, in the case of the miners, was partially successful, but in the case of the waterside workers was, as far as can be seen at the present time, a failure. However, when it was deemed that no good purpose could be served by remaining out and continuing the struggle further, it was decided by the transport council, which had been temporarily called together for the purpose of looking after the interests of the transport workers and the miners, to declare the strike off.

"And the following resolution was put and carried by that body:—'That it be a direction to the unions comprising the

transport council to call meetings of their members at the earliest possible moment to declare the present industrial dispute at an end, and to advise their members to return to work.'

"Acting on the advice tendered by the transport workers' council, your representatives called a meeting on the day following this decision, 5th October, 1917, and the result has since been communicated to you.

PRE-STRIKE CONDITIONS.

"On Tuesday, 2nd October, in response to certain communications sent to the shipowners (at the instigation of the transport council), we received a reply from the Commonwealth Shipowners' Association that, as their vessels were required and our men applied, they would be taken on on pre-strike conditions. The New South Wales Coastal Owners' Association replied in the same strain, with this proviso—that we should have to work with 'loyalists.' The collier owners replied that men would be engaged on pre-strike conditions."

What I want to point out is, that when this very newspaper published that, it was talking about a lockout, trying to make out that the shipowners were to blame—that they were holding up their ships. Yet we have the admission—and in justice to the Seamen's Union let me say they are a superior class of men to any of the others—of how it came to the waterside in the first instance. And, further, we have an indication that the waterside workers in Sydney presumed to dictate to the State Government—and let me here point out that we have adult suffrage, and that the Government of New South Wales represents the people of New South Wales as a whole—these people have the audacity to dictate to that popularly elected democratic Government of New South Wales as to how they should run the railway workshops. Did you ever see such presumption? A demand is delivered to the New South Wales Government, and because it is not acted upon they proceed as far as they are able to starve the whole of the eastern seaboard of Australia. Because what they demand is not done, people 1,500 miles from Sydney right up the coast of Queensland and down as far as Melbourne, have to suffer. It must be recognised how impossible it is to carry on industry under such conditions as we are working under now in Australia.

At 7 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have given the history of the dispute from the seamen's point of view as detailed by their spokesman, Mr. Burke, and as the people of Queensland will naturally want to know who is to blame for all the distress and loss which have been caused, I shall now quote from the statement made by the shipping companies, which was published in the "Courier" of the 6th October—

"On August 13 the steamers 'Malina,' 'Musgrave,' and 'Palmer' arrived at this port, and apparently out of sympathy for the members of the unions affected by the New South Wales industrial trouble the seamen and firemen of the steamers mentioned were withdrawn by the union secretary, and since that time these steamers have been compulsorily laid up for want of crews. As the

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'Musgrave' certificate expired in September she was placed under overhaul.

"On August 15 the 'Wyandra' arrived from Melbourne, and the members of the Seamen's Union whose home port was Brisbane handed in their legal twenty-four hours' notice, and were paid off. As there was no prospect of being able to replace the men who left, the other members of the Seamen's Union on Sydney articles were paid off and returned to their home port at our expense, and, in terms of the award, paid up to the time they reached Sydney. The vessel has since been compulsorily laid up, and is now under overhaul for renewal of certificate.

"On August 23 the 'Wodonga' arrived from the North, when similar action was taken by the crew as in the case of the 'Wyandra,' and the 'Wodonga,' therefore, was laid up until September 8, when, owing to the acute position as regards food supplies in the far North, and as a result of representations made, a crew without any conditions was obtained, and the vessel despatched to the Gulf, via ports. She has since been kept in commission.

"The 'Arawatta' was laid up on August 9 for annual overhaul and renewal of certificate, and our only Mackay tender, the 'Tay,' was, when the strike occurred, also in Brisbane for repairs, and is still here.

"In connection with the crews of the 'Bingera,' 'Kuranda,' and 'Tinana,' the union took no action, and these vessels have consequently remained in commission throughout, any vacancies occurring being filled trip by trip without difficulty.

"Last week representations were made to us that coal was urgently required in Townsville, and we agreed that if we could obtain a crew for the 'Mallina' we would put her on the berth to take 2,500 tons coal, filling up with general cargo. The coal was ordered, but our endeavours to engage a crew proved unsuccessful. The men we tried to engage declined to accept work unless the former crew were signed off the 'Mallina's' articles. This we could not consent to, as the men had been logged as deserters before the shipping master.

"Later on the men said they would sign on, provided we paid them the wages earned from August 1 to 13, forfeited by desertion; but, of course, this was declined. The wages, as provided for in the Merchant Shipping Act, have been paid in to the shipping office.

"Afterwards the men offered to engage provided we guaranteed the vessel would be employed solely in Queensland waters. This stipulation we could not entertain, as, after discharge of the coal, etc., at Townsville, the 'Mallina' would have loaded sugar, etc., at Townsville or other ports for Sydney.

"From this it will be seen that our efforts to relieve the position have been frustrated by the action of the men wishing to impose conditions which we could not conscientiously accept.

"So far, therefore, as the steamers of our fleet in Queensland waters are

concerned, we sum up the position as follows:—'Bingera'—Brisbane-Townsville mail run; 'Tinana'—Brisbane-Maryborough-Bundaberg-Rockhampton trade; and 'Kuranda'—Townsville-Cooktown mail run, have been performing the respective services uninterruptedly owing to not having been affected by the present industrial trouble."

From that quotation it will be seen that, as far as the companies were able, they kept their ships going, and that it was only when the crews were taken out of the interstate ships, through no action of theirs, that the interstate trade was interrupted. It must be obvious to anyone that it would be useless to attempt to relieve the position in the North by running ships one way only. Not only would that be unprofitable to the owners of the ships, but it would not meet the needs of the people in the North, because, apart from their need for food, their greatest need is to get their sugar away. Unless they can get their sugar away, the mills will be blocked for want of storage, and next year's Financial Statement will have to record the fact that, owing to this dispute, which is not due to the action of anybody in this State, Queensland has suffered a heavy loss in her principal agricultural crop, and Australia will be short of sugar next year and will have to make that shortage good at a greatly increased cost by importations from foreign countries. We find that all through there has been a spirit at work in these unions at variance with the wishes of the more responsible and tried members of the unions. Mr. E. J. Kavanagh, secretary of the New South Wales Labour Council, makes the following statement in a report to the Labour Council:—

"He said that during the seven years he had occupied the position of secretary he had never been placed in such a peculiar position as he was then. He could not report as much as he would like, nor in a way that he would like, but he could place sufficient information before the delegates to show them where the Council stood.

"From the outset the constitution of the Labour Council had been ignored. The Council was in no way responsible for the strike or its extension. At the commencement of the trouble the executive of the Council met delegates from unions affected by the introduction of the card system. Some of the unions, or sections of some unions, had decided to take certain action, and he was told point blank that, irrespective of the Labour Council, they would go right on. To that the executive of the Labour Council replied that they would refuse to shoulder any responsibility. (Hear, hear!) At the same time the executive decided that, notwithstanding the breaking of its constitution, it could not stand on technicalities when a section of the workers was up against it."

Taking Mr. Kavanagh's report along with Mr. Burke's, it will be seen that, as far as the tried and responsible members of the union are concerned, they are not in the strike. They were simply coerced into it by the irresponsible section behind. Why should we have to suffer loss—ruin, some of us—simply because of the action of an irresponsible crowd behind the tried men in the

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unions? If that sort of thing is to be condoned, as members opposite wish to condone it—in fact, they do more, they approve of it—it will be good-bye to all enterprise and all productiveness as far as Australia is concerned. As further accentuating the enormity of what has happened, I shall now quote from the "Sydney Morning Herald" of the 25th September, 1917, a judgment by Mr. Justice Heydon. Mr. Justice Heydon says—

"I must confess my inability to find any language which can fittingly stigmatise such atrocious conduct. Desertion in the face of the enemy is no worse.

"In this case a strike by the Coal Lumpers' Union justifying the cancellation of its registration was so abundantly proved that in ordinary circumstances I should do no more than direct the cancellation. The circumstances, however, are so amazing that I think they should be put on record.

"On the 23rd June last year the Minister of State for the Navy made a very special and peculiar agreement with the Sydney Coal Lumpers' Union. His desire evidently was to secure guarantees against any delay in the vitally important war work of coaling transports and Naval cargo ships. The members of the Coal Lumpers' Union seemed to have been formed with their own consent into a quasi military body spoken of as a battalion; and their officials, or some of them, received honorary rank in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve. The hope of the Minister seems to have been that, in assuming a definitely military character for the purpose of Naval work, the men would perhaps realise that they were working for their country and helping in the war; and it is very hard to see how they can have failed to realise that. Moreover, they received, as part of the consideration for the agreement, a definite protection against any call for enlistment. That is to say, their work at coaling the Navy was given a value and character which made it as definite war work as that of the men in the trenches; and in consideration of the promises which they made in the agreement to do this work, they were recognised as soldiers fighting in Australia and honourably relieved of all pressure to enlist for actual fighting. For this, and the other advantages extended to them by the agreement, they promised that they would at all times give the Navy Department the first call on their labour for coaling His Majesty's Australian transports and Naval cargo ships; that they would report at once any improper cessation of work, causing delay in transport coaling, to the officer commanding the battalion, and that the executive of the union would also punish the men guilty of such improper cessation.

"'Will it be believed,' asked His Honour, 'that in the face of such solemn engagements, such high patriotic duties, such clearly recognised responsibilities as these, they refused to coal transports? On Saturday, 11th August, it was known that two transports would be ready on Monday, the 13th, with two colliers along-

side, for coaling. On the 11th the men refused to take orders to do that coaling on Monday, because they were going to hold a meeting on Monday. They refused then to do the work on Tuesday, because they had postponed their meeting to Tuesday, and the whole week went by without the work being touched, and the men never have touched it. Captain Glosop and Captain Waley tried to arrange to meet and address the men, but apparently the men would not hear them: they refused to give them the opportunity, and they never did the work. According to the affidavits the refusal was quite specific; they refused to do any coaling either on transports or on other vessels. Loyal workers were then advertised for, and responded and the work was at last done.

"What is to be said of such appalling facts as these? Are the coal lumpers of Sydney really moral lunatics or are they children of five years old? No; children five years old might be as wilful, as frivolous, as irresponsible; I doubt if even they would be so insensible to their word. If coal lumpers with hose in their hand were extinguishing a fire in a ship, and the men at the pumps on shore suddenly refused to pump, 'to hold a meeting,' and the firefighters between decks perished in the flames, what would men of this union say to the vile traitors at the pumps? They would speak strongly I can well understand, but they could not say a single word which would not apply with all its force, to themselves. They are, in this war, the precise equivalents of the pumpers at a fire. They are not at the front, but they are to send along to the front the men and munitions and supplies necessary for the assistance and safety of the men at the front, and they deliberately refused to do so, although they had not even the poor defence that the coal might help the railways or the factories or even the hospitals. It is quite plain that it could help no one in the world but the Australians who are fighting Germans and that help these men refused. I must confess my own inability to find any language which can fittingly stigmatise such atrocious conduct. Desertion in the face of the enemy is no worse.

"And these men who have carried their mania so far as to dare to declare the Australians in the trenches black (for that is what their refusal to work for them means) have the incredible insolence to call the loyalists who have taken their places scabs. If they are themselves a fair sample of unionists (which God forbid) and if the men who took up their work are a fair sample of scabs, then is 'unionist' a term of the foulest disgrace, and 'scab' shines out as a title of lofty honour. Between such unionists and such scabs let me be the scab a million times over. The great union of Australia (may heaven protect her from domestic fools and imported traitors) is that to which these so-called 'scabs' have proclaimed their loyalty and not one of us can do better than range up beside them. There stands the true unionist, and such callous treachery, such scabbing on the men at the front, as has been shown in this case, is as

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much lower than ordinary scabbing as Australia stands higher than an ordinary trades union."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! The hon. member has devoted the best part of his speech to reading newspaper extracts. I cannot permit him to read newspaper extracts all the evening. He is quite out of order.

Mr. SWAYNE: Mr. Bertram, I was saying just now—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I wish to point out that May, page 290, 12th edition, lays down that—

"a member may not read any portion of a speech, made in the same session, from a printed book or newspaper."

The hon. member has been reading from a newspaper for the last ten minutes and I cannot allow him to continue to do so.

Mr. SWAYNE: It is not a speech I am reading; it is a judgment by a judge, delivered in open court; and it is bearing upon the disastrous position that is now obtaining in Queensland, which has been deemed of sufficient importance in this Parliament to adjourn the House twice already this session. I am only endeavouring to do my utmost in order that the people of Queensland shall really know who is to blame in this matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why do not you blame Billy Hughes, then?

Mr. SWAYNE: No; I think the blame lies on those people who are working under awards equivalent to agreements and who have broken those agreements. If you go right back to the beginning—in fact I think we might go over it again—I say the blame really lies with those who have allowed themselves to be suborned by the enemy.

Mr. HARTLEY: By what enemy?

Mr. SWAYNE: Look, Mr. Bertram. I will tell you what happened in Sydney the other day when I was down there. A hospital ship had to be manned, and these people to whom I am referring now, promised that the work would be done by a certain day—that they would man that ship; and when it came along they refused to man it and they had to put volunteer labour on to send that ship away. After promising to do so, they refused to man a hospital ship. (Government dissent.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Very likely it was prevented by the same means that prevented the men from loading the "Hope-well."

Mr. SWAYNE: Hon. members opposite may talk as they like, but it can be proved; and I am simply trying to bring it up here; and if I am not prevented from giving my proof, I am quite able to prove every charge I have made.

Mr. BARNES: You are confirmed by every judge in New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He will be backed up by every biased judge in Australia.

Mr. SWAYNE: The judge sat in open court in dealing with the matter, and his utterance should be known as far as possible. It is not a mere newspaper report; it is not what a reporter says or what an editor says,

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it is what a judge says; and you will find the same in the law journals. His Honour further stated—

"In face of a case like this, is it not time for the many thousands of honest Australian unionists to pause and consider where they are going? If it is indeed an essential principle of unionism that you must scab for your union, that you must be false to your country for your union, that you must trample under foot honour and good faith for your union, then has unionism become an ugly idol, which, instead of being protected, deserves only to be torn down and destroyed. As a system of defence of the interests of the workers, unionism deserves all honour and assistance; as a system of faithless disloyalty, it must inevitably—as soon as its character is really recognised—be swept away by the indignation of the community."

I think that puts the case clearly. We all know that, in the first place, these unions were formed for the protection of the weak against the strong, and we know that they have been times when they have done noble and splendid work, but like many other things they can be carried too far, and at the present time they are not only a menace to our material advancement, but also a danger to our liberty. We know that not very long ago in Queensland, a branch union up at the back of Townsville imposed a fine of 2s. on its members if they read a newspaper. We know that they coerced their members in regard to such questions as conscription—a question which should be left to every man's conscience, to decide by his own judgment what he should do and whether he should say "Yes" or whether he should say "No." We know that these bodies have taken to themselves the right to coerce their members and to refuse to them the ownership of their own mind. Now, again, I am not reading from a newspaper here, but I am reading a quotation which I have copied out from some remarks by Mr. Justice Higgins. I have been reading Mr. Justice Heydon, and Mr. Justice Higgins uses very much the same words in dealing with this matter. Perhaps hon. members opposite will listen to what Mr. Justice Higgins has to say about the matter. Mr. Justice Higgins says—

"If the federation will not help the country at this crisis the country cannot be expected to extend to them the help of the award. Such men are weakening the forces of the country in its supreme ordeal, are disclaiming their privileges and their duties as members of the community in its supreme ordeal, and are making of themselves, as it were, out-laws."

Judge Rollin says the same.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Who was he referring to?

Mr. SWAYNE: He was referring to the waterside workers, and what he says should have the sympathy of hon. members opposite. I think it has been very clearly proved that those who caused this trouble have been in the wrong. They have erected a structure which is a danger to the whole of our future, and which attempts to coerce us in the exercise of our liberties. In this very Chamber we have had a vice-president of the Australian Workers' Union getting up and

threatening us, both this session and last session. He said that if the majority of Australia did certain things certain consequences would happen.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: No, he did not.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, he did; that the whole community would be hung up and that industry would stop. I suppose that hon. member calls himself a democrat, and yet if the things were done that he threatens us about, they would be done by a majority, and then it would be the case of a minority punishing the majority for doing what they thought was right, whether it was in regard to conscription or the election of a Nationalist Government. He threatens that if the majority did certain things the community would suffer. It is coming to a pretty state of things when a minority threatens the majority.

Mr. STOPFORD: After the majority of the people of Australia had declared against conscription.

Mr. SWAYNE: You threatened before. These things could only be done by the majority, and then the majority would be punished for doing at a moment of great national crisis what they thought was right.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Who was the vice-president you are referring to?

Mr. SWAYNE: I am referring to the hon. member for Mount Morgan. He spoke more as vice-president of the Australian Workers' Union than he did as member for Mount Morgan on that occasion. What has the Chief Secretary of Queensland done at this juncture, when we are fighting against a terrible foe for our very existence? We find that in order to keep the strike going, when there is a risk of it collapsing, to save the face of his friends he steps in and encourages them. I find this statement in the Sydney "Daily Telegraph"—

"The president of the Transport Workers' Federation (Mr. Wheeler) said that he was expecting a telegram from Mr. Ryan, stating that he was sending at any moment interstate vessels now in Queensland waters. This should be due to take place either at the end of this week or early next."

Just as the strike is on the point of collapsing, and there is every indication that the trouble is over, the Premier of Queensland, instead of standing by the Premier of New South Wales, who is fighting on behalf of the whole community against one section, does his utmost to continue the strike. We know that many of these men are socialists, and we know that it would be carrying out their objective if these ships were confiscated, and if they thought by continuing the strike a few days longer they could confiscate the ships, there was every inducement for them to do so. So the Chief Secretary encourages them to carry on. I have here a copy of the New South Wales "Hansard," which contains a debate upon the card system. It may be interesting to hear some of the utterances upon the subject. One of the members of the Opposition there, the same party as hon. members opposite, Mr. Gardiner, the hon. member for Newcastle—

Mr. STOPFORD: He did not run as a Labour candidate last time.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He is not a Labour man; he is a renegade.

Mr. SWAYNE: In view of what Mr. Gardiner discloses, it will be agreed that it is ample time they had the card system. Mr. Gardiner says—

"Take any of the workshops under the Government. A system has been growing up that is no credit to the people who have managed these workshops. Take Randwick. It has been said time after time recently that men there play cards, go to the races, and neglect their duties. I do not believe it, but if true is it not known by the men over them? Of course it is. And it is known by the men over the foremen. The managers know what is going on, and that men are not doing their duty. But they have been afraid to face the position as it ought to be faced by getting rid of these men, from the top to the bottom of the service."

Then—after this tacit admission that they did go to the races, etc.—when the managers, whom he blames for not seeing that these things were rectified, bring in a system for every man to put down his time on the card, we have the whole of Australia involved in this upheaval. I would like to read an extract from a speech by Mr. Beeby, who put his finger on the trouble. I am quoting from the New South Wales "Hansard," No. 13, on page 497.

Mr. STOPFORD: Is that the renegade Beeby?

Mr. SWAYNE: He is a man who is respected throughout Australia, and one of those whom the extremists have driven from them. Mr. Beeby says—

"I will answer the hon. member's question. I know this, that a section of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers some time ago distinctly and definitely announced their intention of adopting the new policy of 'direct action' as against arbitration; and I know this, that a summons order was issued by the authoritative body controlling the engineers calling them to hear a lecture under the auspices of the I.W.W. on 'direct action.' That was done, and I say that most unfortunately a section of that union has caught these new ideas, and that that is one of the things which are responsible for this strike. The bulk of the engineers, I believe, are still sane men, and they are undoubtedly the finest body of workmen in the world."

That proves my contention all through that this has been engineered by an extreme section to coerce the rest and punish them for last election, and the people of Australia have to suffer, because hon. members opposite have said that our hands will be tied if we resist it. I notice there was not a single interjection in the New South Wales Parliament when Mr. Beeby said this. Then, as showing that there have been no grounds for the strike, he says—

"A board exists for the investigation of every possible industrial matter of which human beings can conceive. If the members of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers show a court that the card system is used against them unfairly, the court has power to say that that system shall not be used. If it affects their industrial conditions in any way, the court has power to say it shall not be used. But, before it has ever been used—before it has ever been tested to

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see whether it is going to prejudicially affect any man in the community, this general strike is brought about."

Let me say that Mr. Beeby is well worth quoting. We know that the majority of the people of New South Wales [7.50 p.m.] believe in him. Again, we find that the Minister for Railways in New South Wales (Mr. Ball) gave particulars of this card system that has been so much discussed by people inside the House and outside. On page 514 of New South Wales "Hansard," No. 13, we find that Mr. Ball said—

"I am dealing only with the two systems. I have in my hand cards made out at Walsh Island by the men themselves and countersigned by the foreman. That has been in existence for a number of years, and the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, which now takes the strongest exception to this card system at Eveleigh or Randwick, have been working for many years under this system at Walsh Island. They have been working under the same system at the Colonial Sugar Refinery works. The union accepts it there. It is at present in work—the self-same card system—at the Government garage. These men have been working at other Government institutions and in private institutions under the same card system, and no objection has been raised to it. If it was such a serious offence against unionism, and the principles of unionism, why was it not objected to before? It was only when it was introduced at the tram sheds and at Eveleigh that it became such a serious offence. The card system which is in force at Walsh Island provides that a man puts down the number of his job, the item, the description of the work, the time begun on the job, the time ended on it, and the total time occupied. That is the self-same information asked for by the Commissioners through their card system, namely, the time the job is begun and ended, and the only difference is that in the one case the card is made out by the workman and countersigned by the foreman, and in the other it is made out by the foreman and countersigned by the workman if he so desires."

Then he goes on to refer to the stonemasons at Maroubra who worked under exactly the same system. He was accused of speeding up and then he replied—

"No; it is not a question of speeding-up. But I have no hesitation in saying that perhaps it may be a question of doing away with the shirker, or the man not doing a fair day's work. It may be that, and I am sure that the hon. member would not defend the conduct of such a man. I am sure that hon. members opposite will say that no man in the Government service has a right to be there unless he gives a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. That is all the Government is asking for, and that is all that the card system is for. In connection with the management of the railways, a number of grievances have been mentioned apart from the question of the card system. It may be that there is something in those grievances, and that they are deserving of

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some inquiry. If it can be shown that there are such grievances when the men get back to work, I promise that as far as the Government is concerned they shall have every opportunity to put every legitimate grievance in a proper way before the Railway Commissioners or before the tribunal which has been promised. We are desirous that our great railway service shall be worked in a businesslike and economical way and in the interests of those employed in it. I have no hesitation in saying that as far as the great works at Eveleigh are concerned, there is no reason why those works should not be carried on in such a way that we should be able to build all the locomotives required for our railways at those works. All we want is harmony; if we can bring about friendly relations and harmony between the men working there and the management of the railways, there is no telling what the future may be with regard to those great railway workshops, but I have no hesitation in saying that unless some alteration of system is brought about it will be impossible for us ever to be able to gain the position I have just indicated."

I might mention, as illustrating what the card system is for, that a cablegram from London appeared in a Brisbane daily on the 15th August stating that, notwithstanding the rise in wages, a saving of £43,000,000 would be affected in the cost of ammunition in 1917 by the development of a system of ascertaining the exact cost of production. That is what the New South Wales Government are endeavouring to do at the present time. They are endeavouring to bring about a saving by the introduction of some system, and they want to find out the cost of the work done. Simply because the New South Wales Parliament endeavoured to bring such a system into force in the interests of the taxpayer, we have had all this strike throughout Australia. I think that Mr. Beeby, when he spoke about the I.W.W., put his finger on the real trouble.

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

Mr. SWAYNE: Is my time up?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, the hon. member has exhausted his time.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have got something more to say.

Mr. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): I beg to move—That the hon. member for Mirani be granted an extension of time.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the hon. member for Mirani be permitted to have an extension of time?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

Mr. MURPHY: No.

The CHAIRMAN: The "Noes" have it.

Mr. MORGAN: He is the only man that has been refused an extension, and it is because he is on the Opposition side.

Mr. CARTER (*Port Curtis*): The speech of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat reminds me of a patchwork quilt of a very bad quality, as it appears to be constructed of nondescript patches of newspapers by which he hoped to build a case against

this Government, and they were pieced together with sewing worse than the patching. One only has to go to the Southern States and knock about among the different classes of people down there to realise that the present Queensland Government is regarded with more respect and admiration than any other Government in the Commonwealth. Last summer I spent a considerable time in the various States, and I had an opportunity of knocking about amongst the people and gathering general information. I did not knock about amongst workers altogether, but amongst those who are not workers, and I gathered information which satisfied me that if a consensus of opinion of the people of Australia was taken tomorrow, this Government would come out with a considerable vote ahead of any other Government. If one wishes to confirm that opinion they have only to take the Financial Statements of the other States, and also of the Commonwealth. We find in the Financial Statement the history of the various administrative actions of our Government. There is not a Government in Australia to-day that is not showing a deficit on the year's transactions. Personally, as one who has had a business training, and who for a number of years was engaged in business, I do not regard a deficit during a bad period as a serious thing. During an adverse period no one is surprised if his business does not pay, or even if it goes back a little, if he knows the conditions. The farmer would not get rid of his farm during the drought, and a business man would not get rid of his business during a bad time, because he knows that when the good time comes he will be recouped.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But you have had good periods because you have always had the money.

Mr. CARTER: A Government that has a diminished income does not necessarily have to reduce expenditure if they want to keep the country prosperous. Despite the fact that the whole world is convulsed by the worst war that has ever been known in history, and despite the fact that the State has come through the most disastrous drought, we find that the people of Queensland on the whole are more prosperous than they have been at any period previous to this time. The whole of the primary producers of Queensland are in a more prosperous condition to-day than they were in prior to the war. We find farmers' products fetching a higher price, and we find farmers actively engaged in endeavouring to promote primary industries. Land is fetching a high price. Only a short time ago in the Woongarra Scrub—since this party came into power—land suitable for cane-growing has changed hands at the very high price of £90 an acre. Out on the Blackall Range, around Cooroy, virgin scrub land, on which not a single stick has been cut, has been fetching the high price of £17 to £20 an acre—land only fit for dairying purposes; land of such a rugged nature that when cleared it would be impossible to use it for farming, and very little of it could be used for fruit-growing. During this discussion a number of hon. members on the other side of the Chamber have persistently stated that the farmer is going to the dogs. That is not so. Not only have conditions generally, as far as primary production is concerned, been better, but we find that in the cities the people are more prosperous despite

the war. Despite the number of people who have gone away from both the country and the cities, we find that rents have not gone down; that houses have maintained the normal rents that were paid in pre-war days. The wages of the workers have not advanced correspondingly with the higher charges. Some time since wages did advance slightly, but immediately after the war the prices that were put upon the everyday requirements of the people were greater in proportion than the advance in wages. While the cost of living has advanced all over Australia by at least 30 per cent. to 40 per cent. as compared to pre-war times, wages have not increased by 30 per cent. to 40 per cent.; so that the workers are the only people in Australia who are not so prosperous because of the war. Hon. members on the other side of the Chamber tell us that the only people who have suffered are the big primary producers or the small primary producers. Of course, we know these people are making a pre-election appeal to a section of the people whom they have gulled in the past and whom they hope to gull again. They hope, by a misrepresentation of the actual facts, to tickle the ears of people who have not an opportunity of reading as widely as they should have, and who may be persuaded to vote for them at the coming elections. We have heard a great deal from hon. members on the other side of the Chamber about the proposal of the Treasurer to increase taxation by putting a super income tax upon incomes of over £2,500. No sane person can say that a super income tax with an exemption of £2,500 is going to fall heavily upon the worker or upon the small primary producer. I would very much like to have to pay a super income tax on £2,500 or over, and I am sure every other hon. member of this Chamber would like it, too, and yet we find a loud outcry on the part of hon. members opposite against a super income tax on incomes of over £2,500. What must we think when we hear such an outcry? We can only come to one conclusion. When we find hon. members of this Chamber looking upon this proposal as an unjust and unfair tax at this particular time, we can only come to the conclusion that those hon. members are the champions of that class of people; that those hon. members are here representing that class of people, and that they are making these speeches in the hope of getting the support of that class of people, and of getting what financial assistance that class of people are prepared to give to their henchmen when the time comes. That is the only conclusion one can come to when one hears hon. members on the other side of the Chamber condemning the super income tax as an unfair tax. We were treated to a tirade by the hon. member for Burnett this afternoon. He bitterly attacked the Government for not imposing excessive fares and freights upon the railways.

Mr. CORSER: You know that is not true.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member inferred that. He said they should be run on business lines. He inferred that the wages of the railway men should be reduced.

Mr. CORSER: You know I did not say that.

Mr. CARTER: They must be reduced or excessive freights and fares must be put on. When I asked him to define his position, to come right out into the daylight and say what he meant; to say whether he was

going to reduce these men's wages or whether he was going to put on excessive fares and freights, he said, "The hon. member cannot draw me." The hon. member was frightened to say what he meant.

Mr. CORSER: You are frightened to say what you mean.

Mr. CARTER: I have no hesitation in saying that I am opposed to excessive fares and freights on primary produce in this State, and I have no hesitation in saying that I am in favour of increasing the wages until the men working on the railways or elsewhere get what I consider is a fair living wage.

Mr. CORSER: Good old election cry.

Mr. CARTER: It is all very well for the hon. member, who knows he has got a kink in the neck, to say: "Good old election cry!" He is afraid to say that he would put on increased fares and freights on the primary producers, because he knows they would be against him, and he is afraid to come out in the daylight and say he is in favour of retrenchment on the railways, because he knows he would lose the votes of the railway employees.

Mr. CORSER: You admit I did not say so.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member inferred it, and anyone who was not as dense as a block of wood would understand that was what the hon. member meant. It is no good for the hon. member to come here with that silly nonsense and think the people are going to be gulled with that particular stuff.

Mr. CORSER: I am in favour of reducing fares and freights.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member read from the report of the Commissioner for Railways, and he said the Commissioner for Railways said the railways must be run on commercial lines; that they must be run more cheaply, and he instanced the fact that there was a deficit on the railways, and said that that deficit must be made up somehow. What does he mean? He means either that there must be less money paid to those men who earn the railway revenue or more money must be paid for the cost of carrying the people's requirements on our railways. There is no getting away from that fact. It is as clear as daylight. That is the business way of looking at it.

Mr. SWAYNE interjected.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member interjecting talks about business. How did the hon. member conduct the business when he was running the Carters' Union? By going back on the people who employed him. I have no time for that kind of business man. Why should hon. members opposite oppose a super income tax on incomes of over £2,500? Why are they not fair, and say that we have to make up the deficiency; if too much is not paid away by the Government, if the expenditure of the Government has to be met—it has to be met somehow—and if these hon. members are not prepared to increase the railway freights and fares, if they are not prepared to get it by a poll tax—and they have advocated all these methods—if a majority of hon. members on the other side are not prepared to get the necessary money by these means, why do they oppose a super income tax with an exemption of £2,500? This Government are a Government who are going to put the burden on those backs broad

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enough to bear it. I am one of those who believe that for any sane Government, any Government built on sound economic lines, proposing to do their duty, that is the only line to go upon.

Another tax the Government propose to put on is a tax preferable to any other—a super tax upon land values. This Government propose to impose a flat rate of 2d. in the £1 on all unimproved land values over £2,500. Now, I am prepared to say that any man who has land of the unimproved value of £2,500 is not a poor man, and if during this time of stress and storm a burden has to be borne, whom would you put it on—the backs of the weakest or the backs of the strongest? If a tax is put on land with an unimproved value of over £2,500, I assume that you are putting a tax on a man worth £6,000 or £7,000. Unless a man is absolutely a land speculator, he cannot have land worth £2,500 without in all probability having improvements of an equivalent value. It would be a poor farm, it would be a poor property in the city, it would be a poor property anywhere that had not more improvements on it than its value. Therefore, I contend that any man possessing land worth £2,500 in unimproved value is a man wealthy enough to pay a flat rate of 2d. in the £1 on all money over that. We do not propose to tax a man at that flat rate on £2,500, but over that amount.

We hear a great deal about this land tax from hon. members on the other side of the Chamber, amongst them the hon. member for Drayton. The hon. member for Drayton told us that the tax on £1,000 would amount to something like £65 per annum. If there is anything more ridiculous than that, I do not know what it is. Of course, it is on a par with other statements the hon. member makes in this Chamber. He is a man of varied experience. He set out at first one occupation and then another, but he professes to be expert in all of them. If his knowledge of the various occupations he has followed—amongst them dairying—is no greater than his knowledge of figures or payments under the land tax, then I say he has very little experience of anything he professes to know anything about.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He is jack of all trades and master of none.

Mr. SWAYNE: He is a success, and that is more than you were.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member cannot say I am not a success. I never had to go back on my mates to do anything. The hon. member for Drayton, speaking of the land tax, quoted certain figures, and I am going to quote his own figures because he might dispute them. He said—

"The producer cannot pass it on. A man who might have, say, £4,000 will probably buy 1,000 acres of land at £1 an acre, and spend the other £3,000 in improvements. If there is a citizen that we want in Queensland it is the hard-working farmer with a capital of about £4,000, because that man will work long hours himself and bring all his brain and energy to bear upon the production of foodstuffs so as to make as much out of that farm as he could."

Mr. SWAYNE: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in quoting a speech on another question already made this session?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite in order in quoting from a debate on this question. I understand he is quoting from a speech delivered by the hon. member on this question an evening or two ago.

Mr. CARTER: Yes. The hon. member for Drayton also said—

“Such a man would invest something like that, and he would probably borrow £3,000 from a bank; making a total of £7,000 invested in that farm; and altogether his income would not exceed £1,000, or perhaps £1,200. Out of that would have to come half the income for wages; and then there is the shire council tax, and all those kind of things.”

What he means by “kind of things,” I do not know. He goes on—

“I am prepared to say that when he has paid everything, he would rarely have wages left for himself. Is it fair to inflict a tax of £66 13s. 4d. upon that man because he is engaged in production?”

It is absolute misrepresentation for the hon. member to get up in this Chamber and endeavour to mislead farmers who have land worth, say, an unimproved value of £1,000, by saying that the tax would be £66 13s. 4d. The actual tax, worked out, comes to £3 15s.—only a difference of £63 in £1,000.

Mr. MOORE: Oh, that is wrong.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member says it is wrong. It is absolutely correct. If the hon. member has paid land tax he will know perfectly well, if he has worked the figures out, that it is quite true.

Mr. MOORE: They must have been robbing me if your statement is true.

Mr. CARTER: And not only would the farmer pay only £3 15s., but under the Land Tax Act, if he had paid income tax equivalent to that £3 15s., he would not pay the land tax at all. The present Government, when it brought in its land tax—although it only gave an exemption of £300 to men situated like myself, who own land which is not farming land—gave an exemption in respect of £1,280, provided the farmer had paid income tax equivalent to land tax on that amount. That is to say, if the farmer paid income tax of, say, £4 or £5, he would have an exemption on a freehold farm of the unimproved value of, say, £1,280. Yet hon. members get up on the other side of the Chamber and are so unjust, so purposely unfair, as to make the statements they did. They must know perfectly well, knowing the conditions of the Act, that their statements are untrue. Yet those statements are made to be spread broadcast before the electors of Queensland in the hope that men engaged in that industry will be led to vote against the Government who have protected them from that. Now, the income tax and the land tax, the land tax particularly, will not only get the revenue from the proper source, from those who are in a position to pay it, but will also cheapen land to the farmers. We know that the greater portion of the land tax is not derived from the farmer. I have some figures here that will go to prove that. The other day the hon. member for Gympie asked a question with regard to the land tax, and we learned that out of £362,534 paid as land tax, only £35,433 was paid by farmers with

farms of not more than 1,280 acres. He is a very considerable farmer or grazing farmer who has a freehold of the area of 1,280 acres.

Yet all the farmers in the State, [8 p.m.] including grazing farmers, dairy-men, and fruitgrowers, only pay amongst them £35,433 in land taxation, or less than 10 per cent. of the total amount of the land tax. Still, hon. members opposite get up and tell us that we are taxing the primary producer. Who pays the other £310,000? Why, the owners of offices like the “Courier” office, and huge land monopolists in Brisbane and other places. We know that the large city areas are the tax-paying areas. According to the “Courier,” it is the farmers who are taxed, but, as a matter of fact, the “Courier” is the worst taxed farmer in Australia. Would anyone imagine for a moment that the “Courier” would be the advocate of the farmer? If they thought they could make a profit by sucking his blood dry they would throw his bloodless corpse on the street. And papers in the country districts, which are the questionable offspring of the “Courier,” spread about the country the doctrine that the farmers are taxed, though the primary producers of Queensland who own land up to 1,280 acres are paying less than 10 per cent. of the land tax. Yet hon. members opposite get up in this House and rail about the farmers being ruined. We have heard that other States do not do anything in the way of taxing the farmer. Let us see what happened to the farmers on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, so that we may make a comparison between the Government of that State and the Government of Queensland. As hon. members know, the Government of New South Wales to-day is not a Labour Government, but a Government of the same kidney as the Opposition in this Chamber. This is what I read the other day in one of the daily papers in Brisbane.

Mr. CORSER: What are you quoting from?

Mr. CARTER: I am quoting from the Bible of the Opposition—the “Courier.” (Laughter.) This is what it said—

“At a meeting the town council of Casino made an emphatic protest against the proposed legislation regarding harbour and tonnage dues. It was decided to telegraph the following resolution to Mr. Lee, M.L.A., asking him to protest against the Bill when brought before the House on Friday:—‘That this council, having learned of the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill for the purpose of imposing inward and outward harbour and tonnage rates on all produce and goods carried to and from every coastal port, from the Tweed to Twofold Bay, hereby enters a most emphatic protest against the passage of such a measure. It is the opinion of the council that taxation of this character is inequitable, unfair, and unjustifiable to the primary producers of the coast districts, and is a violation of the promises and pledges made by candidates in pre-election speeches, that economy in public expenditure would obviate the necessity for additional fresh taxation.’”

The Nationalist party in New South Wales, prior to the last election, were in exactly the same position as hon. members opposite, and they told the people of New South Wales that they would obviate new taxation

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by retrenchment. Those gentlemen on that side of the House have not the courage to come out of their shell, and say that they are in favour of retrenchment. We know that they are not going to increase freights and fares or impose additional taxation. Therefore, they must go in for retrenchment of the public service, or they may—amongst other things—attack the unfortunate mothers of orphan children. The primary producers on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales give us evidence that speeches were made to them promising that no taxation of this character would be imposed, and from the extract I have read we learn that they are protesting, through their member, against this taxation and asking him to try to block the passage of the measure through the House. What must we infer from that? That the farmers of that district object to being taxed. If they were in Queensland they would escape that taxation, but the present Government in New South Wales represent the class of people that hon. members on the other side in this Chamber represent, and have not the courage to take the course they ought to follow; indeed, they are so servile to the dictation of those who put them there, that they are taxing, not the rich, wealthy men, but the unfortunate primary producers. And that is what members opposite would do if they had the opportunity, but I am quite satisfied that it will be a long time before the opportunity comes to them. Let me read further what these farmers say. It has not much to do with taxation, but it shows what is in the minds of these people, and how the Nationalists betrayed those who stood up for them in their time of stress. They say—

“Furthermore, most of this proposed new taxation will fall on the shoulders of a great number of men from the coastal districts who at much personal sacrifice recently placed their services at the disposal of the Government during the industrial crisis.”

Those men are howling because they are made a sacrifice. They think they ought to escape taxation. I believe they ought to escape taxation. Anyhow, it should not have been necessary for those men to try to buy themselves off by going back on their mates. When a man leaves his everyday occupation and allows his farm to fall into disuse in order to deprive his unfortunate fellow men of a living wage, I say he deserves some punishment. But, in spite of that fact, I do not think any Government are justified in going back on their pledges and imposing taxes they said they would not impose. Of course, we know the Nationalist Government of New South Wales are too cowardly to attack the big men. Therefore, they attack the weakest section they know—the primary producer.

Mr. MOORE: Do you remember that you attacked the Federal land tax before you got in?

Mr. CARTER: I know that the hon. member will soon become a past member, and the records of his speeches in “Hansard” will be all that we shall know of him. The land tax will not only produce the revenue necessary for the Government, but it will be the means of cheapening the land for the people. You have only to go about Brisbane anywhere you like, and you will see boards up with the announcement, “This land for sale,” where the

land was never for sale before. You will find land for sale all over the place. This is an evidence that the land speculators who are keeping the people off the land and driving them into suburbs far away from their work, because they put artificial values on their land, are being searched out by the land tax. The exploiter is being caught in a net; and now, to escape that, he is allowing the land to fall to its normal, true level—its use value—and he is putting it on the market. A couple of hon. members on the other side—the hon. member for Aubigny and, I think, the hon. member for Stanley—stated in this Chamber that the land tax cheapened land. The hon. member for Aubigny made a statement which I could not quite understand. He said that land at £4 an acre would be more productive than it would be at a lower price. We must only assume that the higher the price the greater the productiveness; the higher the wages you pay, the more productive they are; the greater the price you pay for machinery, the more productive it is. If, instead of paying £5 for a plough, you pay £50, according to the hon. member's argument, you would have a much more productive plough. We all know that as far as the productivity of the soil goes it does not matter whether you give 1s. an acre or £1,000 an acre for it; the soil is the same soil. But we know this also—that the cost of production depends upon the factors that are employed in production; and if you want cheap production, you must either have cheap land, or cheap labour, or cheap machinery—or you must have all three, if necessary. We are satisfied that the great factor in primary production—particularly in farming—and the great essential is cheap land. And if this Government has done nothing else than burst up the big estates and compelled them to allow people to use these lands, instead of holding them out of use, it has done an excellent thing. At the present time you only have to travel from here up to Rockhampton to see vast tracts of magnificent country, fit for agriculture and fruitgrowing purposes, running cattle; and you can get plenty of land to run them upon at 1d. per acre. Yet this magnificent land, in running a line through which the people have expended vast sums of their money, is held out of use. Now, with the land tax, we are proposing to take some of these values which have been created by the people. When we put a tax upon land values we are taking for the people that economic rent which the people, by their expenditure, have created.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: If, in addition to that, we can compel these people to release those areas of land, to take off the artificial means they have of increasing its value—that is to say, take off the artificial value—we will get land at its real value. We had the hon. member for Stanley telling us that a large area of land—I think he said 16,000 acres—in his district could not be sold by the man who held it because, though it was rich land, they (the Government) would not put a railway through it to make it valuable. He has held it for speculative purposes. He hoped the people would spend a considerable sum of money in putting a railway through his land, and would then buy the land off him at the value which their expenditure had made. With a land tax upon land values, that gentleman either would be compelled

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to use his land or to let it go. So I am quite satisfied that in that respect it is a good thing. The hon. member for Aubigny has told us the same thing. What he seemed to concern himself most about was, not that the land tax would affect the farmer, but that it affects the land exploiter up in these districts—the man who, years ago, took up large areas of land—not as a farmer, but with the intention of holding it until some time had arrived when the increase of population and the expenditure of vast sums of public money in building railways had made it valuable. These men, who were only pseudo farmers—the real land exploiters—hoped at some future period to reap a rich harvest from something they had not created. This land tax has come along at the psychological moment and has caught those particular gentlemen napping. We have in this Chamber such reactionaries as those two hon. gentlemen, who are the employes of the rich landowners and the rich moneyed class, opposing it. Now, we are told that State enterprises could in no way be a success. That is constantly reiterated round this Chamber. One has only to remember the most eloquent remarks of the hon. member for Rockhampton last night when he was speaking on the initiation of the Commonwealth Bank. At the time the Commonwealth Bank was proposed the same sort of speeches were made against it that hon. gentlemen made against the State insurance, against the Public Curator's office, and against State butchers' shops and everything else. We are told the same sort of Jeremiah-like story—that the country would go to the dogs if this thing were carried out. Now, what has happened? The Commonwealth Bank—a State run institution—this last half-year showed a profit of £226,000; that is nearly half a million per annum, which flows into the pockets of the whole of the people of the Commonwealth. And we are told that this is a wrong thing. Of course, there is not a man alive to-day in the Commonwealth who, if he were in power, would dare to repeal the Act that instituted the Commonwealth Bank. At the time the war was proclaimed, Australia would have been in a state of commercial chaos but for the Commonwealth Bank. It stood behind every other financial institution in the Commonwealth and kept things in a sound position; so that we not only find that these people in their prognostication and in the statement of its "time-to-come" failure were wrong, but also that it has proved a marked success. Now, the same thing applies to State insurance. It has only been instituted since the Labour party has got into power, and we find it is a marked success. We find that State insurance has not only cheapened insurance but has given a sum of something over £50,000 in one year—in the year of its initiation, in the year of its first operation—it has given a profit of over £1,000 a week to the people of Queensland. Who can say that this institution is wrong or that it is badly managed? It is not only an excellent institution and the proper thing for the people, but it is an institution that is handled by the State, and it is as well handled as any other insurance concern in the Commonwealth of Australia.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: We have, then, the State stations. It is only a little over twelve months since they were started, and if those stations were disposed of to-morrow there is

no question whatever that this Government could make a profit of from £100,000 to £200,000 on this enterprise. Any person who says that the State stations are a failure, or that State stations are going to be a failure, is a man who is either lacking in reason and common sense or who is purposely vile and is endeavouring to revile the Government with the intention of injuring it at the next election. There is no question that the State stations are the forerunners of an immense system of self-supply of the requirements of the people of Queensland; it is the first step in that direction. Once these new stations are established, the people will provide the whole of their own meat. By that time, by the magnificent administration of the Ryan Government, a network of butchers' shops will be spread over the whole of the State; and through those butchers' shops this meat will be handled in the cheapest possible way, and the people, instead of being at the mercy of a few meat exploiters or a few huge privately owned cattle stations, will be able to provide for their own needs. These huge cattle stations could refuse to kill their stock if they so desired. The huge meat industries could shut us off in a moment if they liked, in a private capacity. With State stations and a network of State butchers' shops properly handled, supplying the people at a fair cost of production, we will not be in that position. I am satisfied that that must appeal to every common-sense person in this community. There are hon. members on the opposite side who have said that the State butchers' shops are not a success, but a loss and a drag upon the people. Certain questions were asked by the hon. member for Fitzroy a few days ago, and we find from the answers to those questions that the State butchers' shops have sold, in the whole period they have been running, £191,130 worth of meat. The cost of purchase of that meat was £157,726. The wages amounted to £18,401, and the other expenses, rent, etc., to £7,672. The gross profits were £191,130 and the gross outlay £183,800, leaving a net profit of £7,329. There is only one shop, I believe, which has been over a year in operation. That is an evidence of the immense sums of money that have been taken from the consumers of Queensland during the period that private individuals conducted this industry. Not only have the people got cheaper meat, and a profit of £7,000 odd, but meat has been cheapened at other butchers' shops in Queensland, and therefore the people have also benefited by the reduction of the price of meat in other places. I am quoting these figures with regard to the butchers' shops to give the people an evidence that these shops are a source of profit rather than loss. We are told that not only are the different State enterprises in this State a failure, but also the State enterprises in other States. There has been a great deal said about the State enterprise in New South Wales. For the edification of the House and the public I would like to quote a few figures. I have not been fortunate enough to get the balance-sheets of the different enterprises in New South Wales for this year, but I am quoting the figures for last year. It has been the common talk of hon. members opposite that the Homebush Brickworks in New South Wales did not pay. When Mr. Griffith established the Homebush Brickworks they had to pay up to £3 per thousand for bricks for public use, and he decided, because he

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thought that price was excessive, to make the bricks the Government required, and to that end established the Homebush Brickworks in 1911, only six years ago. The capital expenditure was £85,925. The working expenses for the year ended 30th June, 1916, amounted to £55,677, interest and sinking fund £3,496, depreciation and reserves £6,512, or a total expenditure of £65,685. The earnings for the year ended 30th June, 1916, were £74,820, leaving a profit of £9,135 for that year, or an accumulated profit of £17,545. That industry has proved a remarkable success from its initiation.

Mr. MORGAN: It is closed down at present.

Mr. CARTER: It has been closed down since the Nationalist party got into power. It is in keeping with gentlemen of that kidney, as soon as they get into power, to give away all the plums and perquisites to their particular pals, and the Homebush Brickworks, which shows a profit of over £9,000 a year, and supplied bricks to the public for 30s. a thousand as against £2 15s. by private companies, has been handed over to some capitalistic friends who furnished money to help to get the Holman party in power. I quite believe our friend opposite when he said it was handed over by the Holman Government to their particular friends. Then there are the blue metal quarries at Kiama and Port Kembla, which were established at a cost of £80,000 in 1911. The working expenses in 1915-16 amounted to £82,912, interest and sinking fund £2,906, depreciation and reserves £6,446, or a total of £92,264. The earnings for that year were £98,955, showing a net profit for the year of £6,691, with an accumulated profit up to that date of £22,928. Those enterprises supplied the State of New South Wales with their products at 40 per cent. less than private individuals were supplying them, and yet they tell us that these State industries are a failure. They had the clothing factory established in 1913 in New South Wales. The capital expended was £12,865. The working expenses for 1915-16 were £25,719, interest and sinking fund £740, and depreciation and reserves £323, or a total of £26,782. The earnings for the year ended 30th June, 1916, were £27,491, or a net profit of £709. I could go on quoting nine industries, out of thirteen which have been established, which are a thorough success, and the four which are not profitable so far are not unsuccessful. They have only been established two years, and if not holding their own, show a very little loss. We have definite evidence before us that the State enterprises are a marked success. The State of New South Wales, with all the difficulties thrown in their way, can make these enterprises a success, and the New South Wales Government have the same difficulties that our Government have: we are hedged round with an army of officers who are not always in sympathy with, and who in many cases throw difficulties in the way of, the Government. I am satisfied that with a departmental staff as much in sympathy with the Administration as the various Ministers, the time is not far distant when the people will not only begin to regard State enterprises as a success, but will cry aloud for the establishment of State enterprises in almost every place that they can be had. The hon. member for Stanley, in speaking on the railways, says he is satisfied that a great deal of the loss has arisen from the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act. If there is a fairminded

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man on the other side of the Chamber, it is the hon. member for Stanley. He does not often speak, but when he does speak he generally says what he honestly believes. I never heard the hon. member for Stanley attempt to misrepresent a single action of this Government, and for that reason he is very often in accord with this Government. The hon. member said that he was satisfied that a great deal of the loss on [8.30 p.m.] the railways was due to the repeal of the Guarantee Act, and a great deal of it to increased wages. As I pointed out in my opening remarks, hon. members on the other side are not prepared to say that they will reduce the wages of the railway men. I challenge any hon. member on that side to get up and say that he is in favour of reducing any one on the railway staff by one shilling. I challenge any hon. member on that side to say he is in favour of increased fares and freights. So that the only one who is honest enough to say what is really in his mind is the hon. member for Stanley, who said that he believed the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act by this Government was one of the chief reasons for the falling off in the railway revenue. It is quite true that it is one of the chief reasons for the falling off in the railway revenue.

We have heard a great deal about the falling off in land settlement since this Government took office. But hon. members do not say that the falling off is largely due to the drought. During the 1902 drought we had ample evidence that land revenue fell off in the same way, though the Government of that day had not to contend with the other great difficulties that the present Government are up against. Owing to the recent drought many people have not touched land because it was not possible to get stock. A great deal of the stock of Queensland, and of the Commonwealth of Australia, died during the drought period. Who is going to take up a farm if he cannot stock it? In addition to the scarcity of stock, there has also been a shortage of labour by virtue of the fact that over 50,000 of our best manhood have left Queensland to go to the front, or to go across the sea, at all events; so that anyone proposing to take up a grazing farm or an agricultural farm is deterred by the shortage of labour. In my own district, I am sorry to say that many farms have had to go out of commission, although they were previously paying excellently because of the high prices of farm produce. When you see cows bringing £20 per head, it is evidence of a shortage of stock. Only the other day, on the Tweed River, there was a sale of cattle at which as high as £19 per head was paid for the whole herd. No one is going to start farming if he knows that he cannot get either stock or labour. In my own district many farms that were paying well have gone out of commission because the necessary labour is not available. The Liberal Government in 1902 had not to contend with such a shortage of labour. There was no war on then, and none of their population left the State—unless the Government drove them away to countries where land was cheaper and more worth taking up. We are short of the men that they had in plenty, so that we are in a much worse position, so far as land settlement goes, than they were in at that time. But, despite that fact, large areas of land have been taken up, and I am quite satisfied that, had a drought not

occurred and the stock not been lost, efforts would still have been made to select land for grazing and agricultural farm purposes. So, when hon. members upon the other side endeavour to make out a case against the Government on account of a falling off in land settlement, they are talking with their tongues in their cheeks, and know that they are grossly misrepresenting a Government who have done better than any Government in any other State of the Commonwealth of Australia. I am satisfied that, if the Government are treated as they deserve, judging them by the Financial Statement for this year and by their handling of the affairs of State for the last two years and four months, they will be justified when the time comes in asking for a return to office, and I am quite sure that their request to the people will be answered in the affirmative.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): I wish to say a few words in connection with the huge financial "drunk" that this State has been engaged in during the past two and a-half years. Notwithstanding the fact that this Government have had over £1,000,000 per annum more revenue than any previous Government ever had, we find that they have not only spent that £1,000,000, but they also have a deficit of over £250,000. In my opinion that deficit has been brought about by extravagant and wasteful expenditure, and I will endeavour to show some directions in which the Government have been guilty of extravagance—directions in which I firmly believe the people of Queensland will agree with me that such excessive expenditure was not warranted, in view of the fact that we have just passed through one of the most disastrous droughts that has ever occurred in the history of this State, coupled with the fact that for the past three years we have been suffering from a most disastrous war.

One of the first matters to which I would draw attention in connection with this expenditure is the general management of our railways. I suppose it is the opinion of hon. members on both sides of the Chamber that our railways are our most important State enterprise. It cannot be denied—and it has practically been confirmed by the caucus party—that there is a very large amount of excess expenditure in connection with the Railway Department. Evidently the members on the other side consider that there is considerable leakage in connection with the running of our railways, because we see that they have recently appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into this very matter. That my view of the position is correct is borne out by the fact that on that commission there are two members belonging to the party opposite; and, despite the fact that Parliament is sitting, those hon. members evidently think it is more beneficial to the State—or to the Government—to make inquiries into the workings of that huge concern rather than to attend to their political functions in this Chamber.

Mr. SMITH: Do not forget that very expensive commissions have been appointed by past Governments at different times.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Brisbane stated definitely in this House that if he were Commissioner for Railways, he could bring about a saving in the Railway

Department of no less than £250,000 per annum. No doubt, the hon. member has been placed upon his trial.

Mr. PAYNE: That was under the late Administration.

Mr. MORGAN: Well, if the hon. member was capable of effecting a reduction in the expenditure of £250,000 under the late Administration, seeing that the expenditure of our railways has increased by leaps and bounds during the last two and a-half years, he should be able to effect a reduction of a great deal more than £250,000. The expenditure in that department has been more lavish since the present Government took office than it was during any other period in the history of this State. At any rate, I hope and trust that when the commission presents its report we shall find that it has justified its existence, and that the money that has been spent upon it will prove beneficial to the State and to the taxpayers. There is one other matter in which a saving could be effected of no less a sum than £25,000. A question was asked by the hon. member for Burrum—Colonel Rankin—in respect to the coal required for the Central railway system. Colonel Rankin asked the question in this House, and the information was elicited that no less a sum than £25,000 was being paid for coal from Bundamba over and above the price it could be purchased for at Howard. It seems to me a remarkable thing that the Government are prepared to spend £25,000 in the purchase of coal, knowing perfectly well that the railways have made a huge loss, totalling close on £750,000. Notwithstanding that fact, the Government, in order to revenge themselves upon certain coalminers in a certain portion of Queensland, were prepared to spend, as the hon. member for Maryborough said last night, no less a sum than £25,000 more than was necessary. The people of Queensland will want to know why this money was spent in that direction. The coal purchased at Bundamba cost 12s. 6d. per ton, and the freight another 18s. per ton, making £1 10s. 6d. per ton for the coal on its arrival at Maryborough for the use of the railway system there. That coal could have been purchased at Howard for 16s. per ton. The Government purchased 35,219 tons of coal from Bundamba, and conveyed it to Maryborough at a cost of 14s. 6d. per ton more than that coal could have been procured for at the Howard Coalmine. That cannot be denied.

Mr. WEIR: Who did they pay it to?

Mr. MORGAN: My friend asks who did they pay the 18s. per ton to. The coal came from Bundamba to Maryborough, and my friend will argue that because the trucks belong to the Government, and because the men engaged in the transit of the coal were Government employees, that therefore it cost nothing. If that is the way the hon. member argues about the management of our railways, it is no wonder that the railways and all our State enterprises are being run at a loss.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Commissioner is responsible.

Mr. MORGAN: Unfortunately, the Commissioner is not responsible. The Commissioner is in the unfortunate position that he is supposed to be Commissioner for Railways, but he is not able to fulfil his functions as he would like to, owing to the fact that he is being continually overridden by caucus members and by the Minister of that department.

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We had an illustration of that in connection with the commission of railway experts appointed by the Minister, but the Government abolished that commission and appointed one of their own. So far as the Commissioner for Railways is concerned, he is practically only a figure-head. That is the unfortunate part of it. If Mr. Evans simply made up his mind to take an independent stand, and act independently of the Government, or the Minister for Railways, or the caucus, then things, perhaps, would be altogether different. But these things are taken out of the hands of the Commissioner altogether.

The PREMIER: That is a reflection on the Commissioner.

Mr. MORGAN: I have had illustrations in my electorate as to how matters are taken out of the hands of the Commissioner. I know where certain men have been sacked for offences in connection with the work on which they have been employed. As soon as these men were dismissed by the inspectors, and approved of by the Commissioner, they got in touch with the union secretary, who wired to the Minister for Railways, and Mr. Coyne immediately wired back to have the men reinstated. Those are the things that are going on in connection with the railways day after day. The unfortunate inspectors will tell you now that they have no control over the men at all, and they are now carrying on a policy of least resistance. Instead of the Commissioner being perfectly free to do what he absolutely wishes, and be above party politics altogether, unfortunately he is not in that position at all. Like the inspectors at the present time, he is pursuing a policy of least resistance. These men are afraid of victimisation; they are afraid that they will lose their situations, because they know the revengeful spirit of the caucus party, and they know that the Government can bring force to bear in connection with these particular matters. That is the position in which we find ourselves to-day, and it is one of the reasons why the railways are not paying. If the Commissioner was given a free hand, things would be different. That is what his report says, every word of it, and if you read between the lines, you will see that it proves what I say.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: How can you read every word between the lines?

Mr. MORGAN: In order to make the railways pay, he suggests that it is necessary to increase rates and fares.

The HOME SECRETARY: Wouldn't you howl if we did that?

Mr. MORGAN: He states that it is either necessary to increase the fares and freights or to reduce the number of train miles that are being run. Neither of these things is necessary at all. If the department was economically managed, and no political influence brought to bear, and if the Commissioner had an absolutely free hand, and was allowed to employ whom he liked—the Premier the other night said that he should be allowed to employ whom he liked and pay them what wages he liked—if the Commissioner for Railways was in that position, he would be able to do without running less trains and without increasing the fares and freights, and would make the railways pay. However, political influence is always brought to bear, and that is a state of things we have existing on our railways to-day. In connec-

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tion with the Financial Statement, we have this extraordinary statement made by the Treasurer—

“It is not considered desirable to introduce a general increase of freights or fares, because it is recognised that the burden of such increases would fall most heavily upon the primary producers and upon those members of the community who live in remote parts of the State, and who as a consequence already suffer many disabilities.”

At ten minutes to 9 p.m.,

Mr. SMITH took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. MORGAN: Let us for a moment take that Statement into consideration, and see what was done on two previous occasions since the present Government have been in power. The Treasurer distinctly states that it is not desirable to introduce a general increase in freights and fares, because it is recognised that the burden of such increase will fall most heavily upon the primary producer. That is absolutely true; but, unfortunately, the Government found it necessary to increase the freights and fares on the primary producer on two different occasions, although they have only been in power two and a-half years. If it is going to affect the primary producer by increasing freights and fares at the present time, the increases already introduced have affected the primary producers. Those increases mean no light burden for the farmers and people in the country generally to bear. Why does this statement appear in the Financial Statement during the third session of Parliament? Simply because we are on the eve of a general election. Had this been the first or second session of Parliament, the railway freights and fares would have been increased; but the Premier knows perfectly well that an increase in the freights and fares would have been unpopular at the elections. If he can manage to deceive the electors during the next electioneering campaign and get back into power, then you will find that he will increase the freights and fares irrespective of whether it affects the primary producer or not. If it was a fair thing not to increase freights and fares at the present juncture, then I claim it was not a fair thing to increase freights and fares at all. If the consolidated revenue is to carry the present loss on the railways—and perhaps it is only right that it should—why did not the consolidated revenue carry the loss on the railways during the two previous years?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: So it did.

Mr. MORGAN: The fact of the matter is that the elections are coming on, and the Premier thinks the farmers and country men generally are very gullible individuals, but he must not forget that the farmers and workers in the country know that the cost of their daily food—oatmeal, jam, and everything else—has been increased owing to the fact that the Government increased the freights on these articles. If the Hon. the Premier thinks the people are going to forgive that, then he must think they are very forgivable people. We also find, in connection with the increase of freights and fares, that in the city of Brisbane there was no increase at all. The poor, unfortunate country people have had to carry the burden, and, unfortunately, that is what will happen in

connection with the huge deficit at the present time. At all times the country people are made to pay the piper. Here in Brisbane and in other large cities things may appear prosperous. No doubt, a stranger arriving in this city and walking down Queen street would come to the conclusion that everything was prosperous in this State, but is it a lasting prosperity? Is it not only a fictitious prosperity, such as in the case of an individual who is spending his capital and not living on his income; when the capital is being gradually decreased day by day till eventually there is a crisis, and that man is compelled to cease living in the luxurious fashion that perhaps he was able to maintain while his capital lasted. That is the position in Queensland to-day. We are living upon borrowed money. We are not living upon money that we actually earn, and we are going back day by day and year by year. While things may appear prosperous at present, the fact remains that if we continue on the lines we are following, it is only a matter of a few years—no matter what Government may be in power—when the policy of boom and borrow will end in a bust. I also wish to refer to another matter in connection with the railways, and perhaps when this is made public the commission at present inquiring into ways and means in connection with our railways will think it worth their while to make inquiries into this particular matter. I called upon the Railway Department and asked them to supply me with certain figures in connection with the Ipswich workshops, and I have received the following letter from Mr. Arthur J. Crowther, the secretary, in reply:—

“Sir.—With reference to your call at this office recently requesting to be furnished with information in connection with employees in the Ipswich workshops, I beg to inform you the number of employees in the Ipswich workshops is 1,789. Their average rate of pay is 12s.

“With regard to the time allowance to employees for washing hands before lunch and before knock off time, I beg to inform you that employees in the Ipswich shops are allowed five minutes before lunch for washing hands and ten minutes before knocking off time.”

Every day in the Ipswich workshops there are 1,789 men losing fifteen minutes each owing to the fact that time is allowed them to wash their hands. At the rate of pay these individuals are getting—that is, 12s. 1d. per day—this means that over £10,000 per annum is being paid in wages to men for time not worked.

The PREMIER: If the Opposition got in would they alter that?

Mr. MORGAN: There is an opportunity now, while the railways are practically in a state of insolvency, to remedy that condition of affairs without doing a hardship to any individual, because there is an award under which these men are not supposed to work over eight hours a day. If it is right to allow the men working in the Ipswich workshops fifteen minutes each day to wash their hands, the same thing should apply in every industry under State control. Is it a right thing, is it a proper thing, when we are struggling under adverse circumstances, when taxation is rising up as it is to very high dimensions—is it a fit and proper thing

for the Government to allow fifteen minutes per day to every workman in the Ipswich workshops to wash his hands?

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Do you think it is a wrong thing?

Mr. MORGAN: I think it is absolutely wrong, and I am not afraid to say so. A man should be able to wash himself in his own time. I have to wash myself in my own time, and if a man desires to wash himself, he should do it without being paid for it. It simply means that these workmen in the Ipswich workshops are being paid to wash themselves, and, perhaps, the Government are finding the soap. It is absolutely wrong. I am speaking for myself only, and if the hon. member for Fitzroy thinks he can make any political capital out of it he is at liberty to do so. I say it is positively wrong. The principle is rotten and it should be abolished, more especially when the railways are in the financial position they are at the present time. I have quoted two items in regard to which a large saving could be effected. I pointed out where the Government had paid £25,000 more for coal than the coal could have been bought for elsewhere. There is £35,000 in

[9 p.m.] two items alone. I could go on, but I will not. I never stated yet in this House, like the hon. member for Brisbane, that he was capable of saving £250,000, although if there are many more items like those items quoted, then the hon. member is perfectly correct. I am sure that if the Commissioner had his way, if he was not influenced, he would not have allowed the payment of men in order that they might wash themselves.

I shall now refer to other extravagant expenditure. A referendum was recently held in connection with the abolition of the Legislative Council. There was no necessity to take that referendum during that particular period. The Government were defeated. We have not been able to find out the cost—it is one of those things we are going to get in due course. It may amount to anything up to £20,000, but we do know that one telegram which the Premier sent right throughout the length and breadth of Queensland on the eve of the contest cost over £400.

We find that £17,551 has been spent on the erection of the State hotel at Babinda. I ask again, whether there was any necessity to break the laws of the land, as the Government did, by erecting a “pub” in a prohibited area?

Mr. GUNN: To stop sly grog-selling.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government have practically admitted that the police were not able to do their duty, or the Government were incapable of enforcing the laws of the land, so, in order to stop sly grog-selling, they break the laws themselves. We find, according to figures given by the Home Secretary, that the average bar takings per week were £277 19s. 11d., the amount received for accommodation was £15 17s. 9d., and the amount received for meals £85 1s. 10d. We were told that this place was erected for the purpose of giving accommodation, yet the average received for accommodation in this huge palatial hotel amounts to only £15 17s. 9d. Is it not ridiculous? An hotel costing £2,000 would have been quite sufficient to supply the men with drink, because, evidently, it is only a grog

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shop—the figures prove conclusively that the place is only a drinking shanty. A small building costing, perhaps, under £2,000, would have been sufficient, and the bar takings would still have been there.

Mr. MAY: You are wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: I cannot be wrong, because these figures have been supplied by the Home Secretary, and surely the Home Secretary is not deceiving the House by supplying misleading figures.

The PREMIER: It is your conclusions that are wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: No, my conclusions are right, since we have figures to show that the grog drunk amounted to £277; the people are not after accommodation, but after drink. Whether they sell liquor after hours I do not know, but the point is that only £15 is taken in a week for accommodation and £277 for liquor. I ask if that is the policy of the Government—to give men facilities to obtain strong drink.

The PREMIER: The figures you have given seem to show that the hotel will pay for itself in a year.

Mr. MORGAN: That may be; but it is going to be at the cost of the wives and children of the men, and the men themselves, because everyone will admit—even the Premier—that it is not desirable—at any rate, it is much better not—to give the men facilities to obtain drink if it can possibly be done without.

We find that the Government are pursuing the policy they have always pursued in this connection in combination with the brewers and the "Bung" party, because, in the case of our railway refreshment-rooms, the Government have joined in the ring—that is, if a ring exists—and the Labour party say there is a ring in connection with the sale of meat and in connection with the sale of timber. They have not joined those rings, but they have joined the rings in the sale of liquor, because, if the publicans in a town sell it at 9d. a nip, the Government sell it at 9d. If the town sells it at 6d., the Government sell it at 6d.

The PREMIER: How do you know? You must have been sneaking round to see how cheaply you could get it.

Mr. MORGAN: There is no need for me to sneak round. The Premier may be able to do that. I can go round and buy my drinks just the same as the Premier. Unfortunately, however, he does not pay for his; he has it provided in the railway carriage at the State expense. No wonder the Premier does not know how much it is, because ever since he has been Premier he has not been guilty of paying out of his own pocket. I have, and I know what it costs. The Government have amalgamated with these brewers—the "Bung" party—in order to raise the price of drink. In Brisbane it is 7d., in Ipswich 9d., in Toowoomba it was 6d. and now has been raised to 9d. In Miles, 238 miles from Brisbane, where we have to pay enormous carriage, it is 6d. The publicans sell it at 6d. and the railway refreshment-rooms at 6d., and yet we come to Ipswich, only 29 miles away from Brisbane, and we pay 9d., because the Government are in collusion with the "Bung" party; they are in a combine or monopoly for the purpose of raising the price, simply because the brewers' party evidently have the control of the present Government.

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We have elicited from the Premier the fact that during the time he has occupied the Treasury benches the number of State motor-cars has increased by a large proportion. On 30th April, 1915, we had twelve State-owned motor-cars, costing £5,816, and on 30th April, 1917, we had twenty-one motor-cars, costing £8,432. Notwithstanding the fact that we have a war raging, notwithstanding the fact that we had a drought, notwithstanding the fact that we have been told we must economise, we discover that the motor-cars have increased considerably, and also that the cost of running them is excessive. These cars are not being used legitimately.

The PREMIER: They are.

Mr. MORGAN: If the cars were used legitimately, we would not object; but, unfortunately, they are not. It would be a good thing if the Government would do away with all their motor-cars in Brisbane, and hire motor-cars when they require them; it would be cheaper. Look at the cost of running motor-cars to Beerburum the other day—£9 odd for overhauling—a ridiculous figure. We know that there is a leakage here. If the Government did away with the motor-cars, when a Minister wanted a car he would ring up a garage, and there would not be so many joyrides. A system of that kind would be cheaper for the State than the present system of having Government-owned motor-cars. I advise the Government, if they want to bring about economy, to endeavour to do away with the motor-cars as far as possible, as we cannot afford them the way they are being used at present. Motor-cars, used legitimately, are a paying concern, but when they are used indiscriminately, for pleasure purposes particularly, it is time that something was done to prevent it.

I desire now to say a few words with reference to the Public Works Commission. What has the commission done to earn the money which has been expended upon it? During last year the Public Works Commission drew no less than £1,250. According to the report of the Auditor-General for this year, the commission has cost £2,342 5s. 6d. The members of the commission receive £2 2s. per day each, and the secretary £1 11s. 6d. per day, and I believe the Chairman gets an additional amount.

The PREMIER: That is not correct.

Mr. MORGAN: If it is not correct, I am glad to know that. I have endeavoured to find out what are the facts, and I have been told that the chairman received something additional, but I am glad to hear that that is not correct.

The PREMIER: The rest is not correct, either.

Mr. MORGAN: If the rest is not correct, I should like to know the facts.

The PREMIER: They receive £2 2s. per sitting when they are out of Brisbane.

Mr. MORGAN: I shall read what the Auditor-General says in his report. He says that the members receive £2 2s. per day and the secretary £1 11s. 6d. per day. The hon. member for Eacham told us the other night that when the commission are sitting in Brisbane they receive nothing, but that they get £2 2s. per day while they are out of Brisbane. That, however, does not cover all the expenses, because we discover from the auditors' report that coaches and motor-cars have to be paid for. The members of the

commission have railway passes, so that their fares on the railway cost them nothing. Perhaps it would be a fair thing for them to receive £2 2s. per day if they had to pay their railway fares and their fares on motor-cars and coaches, but such is not the case. I understand that on one particular occasion it was ruled that while the House is sitting members of a commission are not supposed to be away taking evidence. But we find that the Works Commission are up North at the present time taking evidence while the House is sitting. I am sorry that the hon. member for Eacham is not present, because I wish to refer to a statement in which he attacked me for not being in the House. I think it will be recognised that I am one of the most regular attendants in this House, and that attack just shows what tactics members opposite will resort to. I have looked over "Votes and Proceedings," and I find that up till to-day I have a better record for attendance than the hon. member for Eacham. One week when I was absent I was away addressing recruiting meetings. Has the hon. member for Eacham addressed recruiting meetings? Another week when I was absent I was kept at home because there was 5 inches of rain, and as I live 32 miles from a railway station, I could not get down, and I wired to the leader of the Opposition informing him that I was flood-bound.

Mr. BERTRAM: You did not even reply to the invitation of the secretary of the commission to be present at a sitting of the commission.

Mr. MORGAN: All I am referring to now is the cause of my absence from the House, and I do that because the hon. member for Eacham said I was absent and not attending to my duty. Therefore, the interjection of the hon. member is not apropos to my remarks. I should not have referred to the matter at all, were it not that the hon. member for Eacham went out of his way to attack me. I have given an explanation of my absence from the House, namely, that one week I was addressing recruiting meetings and another week I was flood-bound. But notwithstanding those facts, my attendance in the House is better than the attendance of the hon. member for Eacham.

The PREMIER: Your apology is accepted.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Eacham has drawn £180 12s. this year in connection with the Public Works Commission, so that he has been receiving a double salary. He has been receiving a salary as a member of this House and fees as a member of the Public Works Commission.

The PREMIER: He cannot travel for nothing, you know.

Mr. MORGAN: Is that consistent? Is it right that a member elected to represent his constituency in this House should be given other work to attend to while the House is sitting? In my opinion, it is against the Standing Orders, and, as I have already stated, it has been ruled out of order by a previous Speaker. I say that the members of the commission are guilty of illegally receiving money for services as members of a commission while Parliament is sitting. The hon. member for Eacham also referred to the fact that the commission turned down the Taroom Railway. Unfortunately, the commission did not go into

the reasons why the Taroom Railway was passed by this House. It was passed by this House owing to the fact that it was distinctly stated by the Minister for Railways and the Government that it was to be a connecting link between the Southern Railway and the Central Railway system, which would serve the people of the country in times of drought. The line was to go from Miles to Taroom, and from Mount Morgan to Taroom. The railway was built from Miles to Juandah and sleepers were used which would carry heavy rails, so that the only thing which should be necessary to make it a main trunk line would be to take up the light rails and put down heavy rails. The sleepers, railway bridges, and culverts were made to carry the traffic which would run over a heavy line, and the Government constructed the line with a view of making it a main trunk line to run from Roma to Rockhampton. The commission did not go into that particular matter at all. They only dealt with the fact that there was certain land between Juandah and Taroom infested with prickly-pear. They knew it was not redeemable, like a lot of other land between Chinchilla, Miles, and away up to Roma.

The PREMIER: You refused to give evidence before the commission.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier has been wrongly informed when he states that I refused to give evidence. In the first instance, my evidence in writing appears in the commission's report. So far as his interjection is concerned, it is not true in this particular instance. I state emphatically—and it cannot be denied—that when the commission went into my electorate they had not the courtesy to inform me that they were going; and I never knew until I saw it in the Press that the commission was in Taroom—that it was coming into my electorate.

Mr. BERTRAM: The record will show that you were invited.

Mr. MORGAN: I say the records cannot prove that I was invited until the commission was there; because the secretary came and told me that an invitation had not been extended to me, owing to the fact that there was something said that members of Parliament were not to be informed or engaged in connection with the commission in their own electorate. But, after I complained about it, it was an extraordinary thing that they thought it advisable to inform all other members of Parliament when they were going into their particular electorates. The point is this: the chairman says they came to a conclusion on evidence. I am prepared to have the evidence, as it was submitted to the Royal Commission, placed in the hands of a Supreme Court or District Court judge—to let that man go over the evidence and deal with it exactly as it was adduced by the commission—and if that particular judge gives a verdict against the Juandah line being extended, I will forfeit £50 to any charitable institution, if the chairman of that Royal Commission will do the same, should the verdict go against him. I say the evidence—every bit of it with the exception of one man, Mr. Gordon Graham, the Under Secretary—goes to show that that railway line should go on to Taroom in order to save the good land in the Taroom district. The bulk of the evidence was in favour of the line going on.

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Mr. Gordon Graham stated in his evidence that a certain number of prickly-pear selections had been lost, that they had been forfeited. That is true to a certain extent. But Mr. Graham did not tell the commission that, while they were forfeited as prickly-pear selections because the people could not clear them, they are still held by the same people—are still being worked by the same people under different conditions. I know what I am talking about, and I can prove it. Most of the people are still there, working the land, as occupation licensees, with cattle. It was never stated, in this House or anywhere else, that that line would be the means of clearing that dense pear; simply because we have the main line running through dense pear, with good country right along to Chinchilla, Miles, and other places, and it was never cleared by the railway. It was never suggested that this would be the means of clearing the pear. But what we did know was that if that railway had gone to Taroom—where it should have gone—it would have been part of a main connecting link with the two great railway systems—it would have been a railway to shift stock at the time of drought, and for the Roma people to send their wheat direct to Rockhampton, if they so desired. If you measure on the map, you will discover that the distance from Roma to Rockhampton along this particular line is about the same as the distance from Roma to Brisbane; so that the people in that wheat area could have sent their wheat into Rockhampton town with the same mileage as they have to bring it to Brisbane. Those facts were never gone into by the commission. They did not trouble about that. They went up there, I honestly believe—into my electorate—for the purpose of turning down that railway, simply because it happened to be in the electorate of a member of the Opposition. That is honestly my opinion.

Mr. PAYNE: You are a waster, Morgan.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MORGAN: If my friend talks like that he will get all he wants. I am going to protect myself, if the Chairman will not protect me. When the Chairman heard a member call me a waster, he took no notice of it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Order! Order! Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. MORGAN: I am only protecting myself; and I am going to protect myself no matter what may happen. Now, in respect of this matter, I say—and the report proves what I state—there was only the evidence of Mr. Gordon Graham given in connection with this particular matter. He stated that this land had been forfeited. That is true. But, as I said, that land is still being used; and there is no more justifiable line constructed, or likely to be constructed, in any part of Queensland. The line should be gone on with; it is necessary. To show the biased mind of the chairman of that commission—Mr. Gillies—he distinctly stated that had the Labour party been in power at the time that the railway was constructed the first section of it never would have been constructed. He went on to show that the line should have gone from Chinchilla to Taroom, or to Juandah. He knew nothing about it. He deliberately made that statement, not having seen the country, and knowing nothing whatever

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about it. And the extraordinary thing about it is that had the line gone from Chinchilla to Juandah—as he stated—there would still have been the same section which the commission refuses to construct from Juandah to Taroom. Is not that an extraordinary position for a chairman to take up—that it should have gone from Chinchilla to Juandah? And they turned down the line from Juandah to Taroom because, they said, it was not a proposition which should be gone on with! Yet he deliberately states that had the line gone from Chinchilla to Juandah they would have gone on with the line from Juandah to Taroom. You can see the fallacy of the whole thing. What I say is absolutely correct in that regard. The evidence was not properly sifted; it was not properly weighed. The evidence of Mr. Graham was taken at the cost of all the other evidence submitted by eighteen or twenty men of all shades of political opinion, who gave their evidence fairly and squarely. But, unfortunately, the commission did not arrive at a decision in accordance with the evidence. The challenge I have made stands good if any member of that commission is prepared to take it up.

I also want to deal with the State sawmills. They are another means of loss. And we have members getting up on the caucus side of this House, and saying, "Look what we did in connection with the State sawmills; had those sawmills not been established the cost of timber would have been much higher than it is at the present moment." That is not true, because it has been proved without doubt that the cost of timber has risen 30 per cent. since the Government have had these sawmills. We also have heard members opposite state that this was a new concern. They forget that the Government bought it as a going concern. What is the good of talking about its being something new? They bought it as a going concern, something that was prosperous when they purchased it from a private individual. They have run it for two years. They made a loss in the first year of £1,313, and in the second year of £1,913; and there has been a rise of 30 per cent. in timber during the period they have had that mill. Yet they say they were justified in establishing that particular mill! Again, I want to point out that had that mill competed in open competition in connection with timber used by the Public Works Department, they would have had a greater loss. Had the Public Works Department followed out the same system as the Railway Department—called for tenders and allowed the State sawmill to tender along with the private individuals—the State sawmill would not have had any work from the Government at all. They are only getting work from the Public Works Department, simply because it is compulsory to give it to the State mill, whether the Government or the department like it or not. The Railway Department called for tenders, and what has been the result? The State mill has not received an order; they have been beaten by private enterprise every time. That is the system we ought to have—the system they have brought into force in New South Wales. If we are going to have State enterprises—if the Public Works Department are going to build buildings of any description—let them call for tenders, and let the State timber mills tender for the work; let them tender for the construction of the building, whether it be hospitals, schools, or anything else, in open competition. If the State is the

lowest tenderer, give it to the State; if the State is not, give it to the private individual. That is the system that ought to be in force. Under those particular conditions we would know exactly what was happening. It would save thousands—and, in fact, hundreds of thousands—of pounds to the State. If those particular leakages were removed there would be no necessity for this increased taxation. I am quite satisfied that, had the Liberal Government remained in power, we would have discovered there would have been no increase in taxation, and no retrenchment. The public service would have been in an equally good position to-day under a Liberal Government as they are under a Labour Government—perhaps a little bit better. There would have been no increased taxation; the poor, unfortunate farmers would not have had to pay more railway freights and fares; the country people would have had cheaper means of living; and the people of Brisbane would have been better off in all directions. My friend, the member for Port Curtis, had a lot to say on the land tax; he told us how this was only affecting city people, and how the farmers practically had to pay only 10 per cent. Perhaps you rent a house, Mr. Smith, and, if you do, I think you will agree with me that, owing to the fact of the land tax being placed on city properties rents have gone up, and if rents have gone up owing to the land tax, it is the rents that pay the land tax.

Mr. COLLINS: You were once a follower of Karl Marx and Henry George in Victoria.

At twenty-five minutes to 10 o'clock,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MORGAN: My friend is not correct. I never was a follower of Karl Marx or Henry George. That interjection does not alter the fact that what I say is true. Hon. members opposite gloat over the fact that there is a land tax, and say, "Look what the 'Courier' will have to pay." I am quite satisfied that when the land tax is taken into consideration throughout the whole of the State, it is the tenant who pays it, and not the property-owner. The fact of this increased taxation being placed upon the people does not mean that it is the capitalist who is bearing the burden of increased taxation. It is the working class which is bearing it. I have heard the hon. member for Bowen say that the working classes paid all taxation, and, if that is true, they are going to pay the extra taxation which the Government is putting on.

Mr. WILSON: If that is so, why did the Upper House refuse to pass the Bill?

Mr. MORGAN: I am here to represent the working classes, the same as other classes, and I say that it is wrong to put all the taxation upon the working classes. Property-owners know that they have to pass it on to the tenants. No one opposed the increase of fares and freights more than the Minister for Lands. I supported him when he spoke against it while in Opposition, because I thought he was genuine. But the moment he got in the Government, with pay and power, he was the first to put on increased freights and fares.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: He only wanted it on under 4-ton lots.

Mr. MORGAN: He only wanted it on under 4-ton lots, because he is a store-

keeper. If the hon. member for Maranoa, when in opposition, thought that the Government should decrease freights on the necessaries of life, he had a sound logical argument when he said that the freights and fares on the country people should be reduced.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I say so now.

Mr. MORGAN: He says so now, and he is in a position to demand that what he says shall be carried into effect. If he says so now, he cannot approve of the policy of the Government in increasing fares and freights.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are not doing it.

Mr. MORGAN: The Minister is quibbling. He knows that they have done it. If he inquires from the managers of his shops on the Western line, they will tell him that the price of commodities has gone up, and one of the reasons given by the managers of these shops is that it is owing to the fact that freights have been increased.

Mr. PETERSON: Of course, they say so.

Mr. MORGAN: They are managers for the hon. member for Maranoa. (Opposition laughter.) I am very pleased to see that hon. members opposite recognise that the hon. member for Maranoa only carries on his business the same as anybody else.

I now want to deal with land settlement. The Minister for Lands knows perfectly well from reports already disclosed that land settlement in Queensland is not progressing.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is true.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government tried to hoodwink the people by drawing a red herring across the trail. One of the reasons why settlement has not increased under the present Government is because the perpetual lease has been introduced.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is not true.

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

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Before this Statement of the Treasurer is adopted, I want to make some remarks in connection with the position which the State finds itself in after two years' administration of the Labour Government, and to refer to the matter of the sinking fund, for which provision was made some years ago in the period of the Kidston Government. I remember several discussions in this House, where the then Opposition, as they termed themselves, who are now occupying the Treasury benches, contended that it was sound finance to make provision for a sinking fund for our loans. I shall, a little later on, quote from the remarks which fell from the men who now occupy Cabinet rank, but, before doing so, I want to refer to a book which was issued, showing what the Labour platform means. On page 25, dealing with the matter of sinking funds, it says—

"The Labour party demands that this state of affairs shall cease. It demands that definite measures shall be taken to wipe out loans as they mature, instead of following the fatal course of contracting new debts in order to pay off old ones, and continuing the payment of interest year after year without in any way reducing the principal owing.

Mr. Roberts.]

"It is a senseless and suicidal policy for the public, and the only beneficiaries under it are the financial institutions and the mortgage-mongering owners of our large estates, who are mostly absentees.

"No person of intelligence would conduct his private affairs in such a reckless fashion, and the Labour party, when in power, will promptly put a stop to it.

"With the imposition of the land tax, the cessation of public borrowing, the inauguration of a sinking fund to redeem the public debt, the establishment of a State Bank, and the making of advances to farmers and miners for the development of the country, the financial measures of the Labour party will be complete."

Mr. WILSON: Is that the little red book?

Mr. ROBERTS: There are several things there which this Government have not yet seen fit to establish, but there is certainly one thing there which was established by a previous Government which they have seen fit on this occasion to depart from. Among the Ministers to whom I refer, I notice that the present Minister for Education, speaking in this House in 1910, as reported in "Hansard," vol. cv., page 869, said—

"If we wish to provide for the extinction of our debt, the proper way to do it is to establish a sinking fund, so that year after year, in an automatic manner, a certain amount may be devoted to the purpose of reducing our loan indebtedness."

On page 2975 of "Hansard" for the same year Mr. Lennon, now Secretary for Agriculture, said—

"My own view is, and always has been, that no Government and no State is justified in borrowing money and increasing its liability without establishing some means whereby those loans will be met."

Mr. PETERSON: You forget there is a war on—different circumstances now. You know that as well as we do.

Mr. ROBERTS: When we see the daily appeals made in this State for recruits, unfortunately, we know that there is a war on.

Mr. FOLEY: What are you doing here?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am surprised at a man like the hon. member for Mundingburra making such an interjection. If I offered my services to-morrow, unfortunately, I would not be accepted. My eyesight, as most hon. members know, is such that I would be turned down if I offered my services, and it would be simply a farce for me to offer to assist the Empire as a soldier. But the only son I have has gone to the front. He has been wounded, and has returned again to France, so far as I know. That boy went at the age of eighteen, and he will not be twenty-one until next Friday.

Mr. FOLEY: Did you send him?

Mr. ROBERTS: He went voluntarily. I gave my consent as his father, and his mother gave her consent. I think that the hon. member must regret his interjection. Coming to deal with the financial position of the State, what do we find? We are told that the Government expect to get a certain amount of money from taxation. On page

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3 of the Auditor-General's report he shows that the actual receipts from income tax were £756,291 16s. 3d., or £56,291 16s. 3d. more than the estimated revenue; the amount received from land tax was £362,534 11s. 5d.—£82,534 11s. 5d. more than the estimate; and the receipts from stamp duties were £321,263 6s. 4d.—£13,263 6s. 4d. more than the estimate. I notice that there was a decrease of £41,445 3s. 8d. in the receipts from lands as compared with the estimate, and that the railway receipts were £105,563 16s. 3d. less than the estimate. Notwithstanding that decrease in the estimated earning of the railways, we find that the expenditure, which the Government claim to have watched very carefully, shows an increase for the year of £166,182 13s. 9d. That is to be regretted. It shows that the Government have not exercised that care with regard to the expenditure in this large department that they should have shown. What used to be a somewhat paying department is going to be a very serious drag on this State unless considerably more careful supervision is exercised by the Government over the expenditure. A great deal has been said about the price of meat and about the effect of the establishment of State butchers' shops.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You are going to have one in Toowoomba.

Mr. ROBERTS: Well, it will give some relief to the people of Toowoomba, even if the people are not able to use the shop, if it enables them to get more meat. I saw some remarks to-day in the "Darling Downs Gazette" by one of the leading butchers in Toowoomba, Mr. Watson, who points out the seriousness of the position in that district with respect to the meat supply. Mr. Watson said that three years ago bullocks cost him £3 to £3 10s., which meant meat at 7d. to 8d. per lb., whereas now bullocks cost from £16 10s. to £18, and the retail price of meat has increased by 3d. and 4d. per lb. on the prices I have mentioned. He further said that one firm had closed three of their shops and another firm had had to close one shop, and that, if rain had not come when it did, he did not think there would have been one shop left in Toowoomba to-day, and he could see no relief to the end of November, when, probably, the meatworks would stop buying. He also said that he had not made wages for the past two months, and the previous month he had only made a profit of £5.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: How was it that he could not make wages?

Mr. ROBERTS: The business has not been paying. A few days ago I was giving some consideration to the matter of the meat supply, because it is continually being mentioned by the gentlemen occupying the Government benches, and I communicated with the Department of Labour in Brisbane, asking them to give me some information with regard to the wages of the men. I am not using this information to endeavour to prove that they are not entitled to those wages, because the Arbitration Court has awarded them, and I accept that award. I am using it as one reason for the high price of meat. In reply to my inquiry, dated 8th October, Mr. Walsh, the Chief Inspector of Factories and Shops, wrote—

"Brisbane, 9th October, 1917.

"Sir,—In response to the request contained in your communication of the

3th instant, I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of each industrial award affecting the meat industry in Toowoomba, issued since the introduction of the Wages Board Act of 1908.

"I have not any very definite statistics as to hours and wages paid prior to the issue of the first award, but the annual report of this department for the year ended 30th June, 1909, shows an average wage paid to butchers over twenty-one years of age, in Toowoomba, of £2 2s. 1d. per week, the ordinary working hours varying from fifty to sixty per week."

I know that of my own knowledge. I know the butchers in Toowoomba, and I know that they have worked long hours.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: When was that?

Mr. ROBERTS: In 1909. I find that there have been a series of awards since then. In 1909 the first shopman got £3 a week, and the second shopman £2 10s., with £2 5s. for general butchers and £2 12s. 6d. for other hands. The hours were then reduced to fifty-eight per week. In 1913 the wages were increased under the four headings to £3 10s., £3 5s., £2 9s., and £2 15s., and the hours remained at fifty-eight per week for summer and fifty-six in winter. The next increase was in 1917, when the hours were reduced to forty-eight, and the wages were fixed at £3 15s. and £3 5s. under two headings only. These rates only apply to the retail butcher shops.

The PREMIER: What do you want to prove?

Mr. ROBERTS: That it is going to add to the cost of meat. Taking the question of apprentices, they started in 1913 at 16s. for the first year, £1 1s. for the second year, £1 6s. for the third year, and £1 10s. for the fourth year. In 1917 these rates were increased to £1 for the first year, £1 5s. for the second year, £1 10s. for the third year, and £2 for the fourth year. Then, again, we find that in connection with the slaughtermen, they received increases, and all this adds to the cost of the employer, and he passes it on to the consumer. In 1913 the slaughterman received £3 and his assistant £2 8s. They had a series of rises since that time until 1917, when the slaughterman was awarded £3 17s. 6d., and his assistant £3 5s. What I contend, so far as the State shops are concerned, is this: they get the meat at a fixed price—a price which they have fixed themselves, and which has been referred to many times in this House as being 1½d. less than they are charging to the British Government. They come into competition with men who are already established in business, and what is the result? As I pointed out earlier in my remarks, numbers of private shops have been closed up and numbers of men thrown out of employment.

The PREMIER: Are you arguing against State shops?

Mr. ROBERTS: I am not arguing against State shops so long as they compete on business lines. If the State made reasonable arrangements whereby meat could be secured for these private shops, then they could compete successfully with the State.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: What about the poor pastoralist?

Mr. ROBERTS: I do not know that he would suffer to any great extent. I remember that, in the earlier stages of the war, there was an offer made on behalf of the pastoralists, and I regret that that offer was not accepted.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The hon. member for Wide Bay made an offer.

Mr. ROBERTS: I notice some remarks made by the hon. member for Balonne in his speech last night. It is not often that that hon. gentleman interferes in any other electorate. I think, if he had been fully seized of the position, he would not have addressed himself in the way he did last night in reference to the hospital at Toowoomba. I noticed his remarks in the advanced copy of "Hansard" just issued, and he makes certain statements there that cannot be borne out. The Home Secretary, in the absence of the Premier, accepted an invitation to visit Toowoomba on Saturday last, and he received a deputation in connection with the Toowoomba Hospital. That deputation represented the citizens of Toowoomba who have undertaken to make a special effort to right the finances of that noble institution. If I had known it would be necessary to refer to this matter, I would have got the figures which were supplied to the Home Secretary, but I have looked up the Press report, and found the figures that were supplied to the Home Secretary on Saturday last. The position which the Toowoomba Hospital finds itself in financially is not because of the treatment of patients within its area, but by reason of the large number of patients which came from outside the Toowoomba collecting area. In 1917 the number of patients which came to the Toowoomba hospital outside the collecting area was as follows:—On the Western line, 144; on the Southern line, 22; on the South-western line, 25; on the Brisbane line, 25; and 20 others from outside the State altogether. From towns which have got hospitals in their centres, the following patients were received:—From Charleville, 14; from Adavale, 11; from Chinchilla, 12; from the Warwick district, 10; from Roma, 16; from Dalby, 21. We estimate 6s. per day as the cost of a patient in the Toowoomba Hospital, and I think that that will compare favourably with other institutions. That means that those extra patients cost the Toowoomba Hospital £1,907. They received in fees £469, leaving £1,439 to be found by the generosity of the subscribers to the Toowoomba Hospital. All this was put before the Home Secretary very clearly and lucidly last Saturday. Then another gentleman put forward the claim that Toowoomba should get better treatment as a base hospital, mentioning that three years ago Townsville got £1,250 per year, and for the last two years £1,000 per year; and that Rockhampton got £1,000 each year for the last three years. That is the position. Take 1916. In that year the people in the Toowoomba district subscribed on behalf of their hospital no less than £3,072, and we find that the subscriptions in Townsville

[10 p.m.] amounted to £1,802, and in Rockhampton the amount was £1,685.

I am not saying this in any carping spirit, but just to show that the people of Toowoomba have well supported their hospital. The amount subscribed in Townsville during 1916 was £500 less than in the previous year; in Rockhampton it was £200 less, while

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Toowoomba had an increase of £150. That goes a long way to show that Toowoomba has done very well for the sick who come within the reach of the Toowoomba hospital. In addition to that, the average number of patients at the Toowoomba hospital was 109, at Townsville 83, and at Rockhampton 64. These facts were put very fully before the Home Secretary by that deputation. I was not prepared to deal with the matter to-night, but I think, in justice to the district, and seeing the remarks that were made by the hon. member for Balonne, I am quite within my rights in emphasising the position. The people of Toowoomba propose, and I have every reason to think they will be successful, to raise by a special effort between now and December a sum of £1,500, which will help to put the hospital financially right for the time being, and we hope that the Government will see fit to put us in the position of a base hospital, so that we may continue the work which has been so successfully done for a number of years in regard to aiding people who are suffering serious illness.

The PREMIER: Your own Government turned you down.

Mr. ROBERTS: We are able now to snow a much stronger case than we were when we went to what the Premier terms "our own Government." But I would remind the hon. gentleman that the Government is the Government of the State at all times, and this Government, in particular, I understand, is always out to aid the sick.

The PREMIER: Would you indicate whether, in the event of the Opposition getting into power at the next elections, they would make Toowoomba a base hospital?

Mr. ROBERTS: I quite anticipate that if that question is still in abeyance—I hope because of its importance that it will not be—if it is still in abeyance, I think the Premier will more trickily answer that question than I am able to.

Dealing with the financial position, I can see nothing on which the Government can congratulate themselves. I feel confident that the State as a whole will certainly be distrustful, and will be quite ready to give an emphatic pronouncement at the ballot-box at the first opportunity. I may say that, as far as my political experience goes, I had the misfortune to enter this House in 1907, and the then Liberal Government were able to carry on the affairs of the country.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Were you a Labour man then?

Mr. ROBERTS: No.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Were you never a Labour man?

Mr. ROBERTS: I will not say that, but I entered this House as a supporter of the Kidston Government.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Did you sign the Labour platform?

Mr. ROBERTS: Yes. Whatever the position then was, it has been fully explained to the people interested in my presence here, and there is no need to repeat what happened ten years ago. It is one of those silly statements made by way of interjection. I

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am dealing with the financial position of this Government in contrast with the position of the Government which I had the privilege of supporting years ago. Taking the last three years of the Denham Government, we find that the surpluses were as follows:—1912-1913, £6,115 11s. 8d.; 1913-1914, £10,742 15s. 3d.; 1914-1915, £3,259 0s. 2d. And in 1915-16, the first year after this Government came into power, they showed in their Financial Statement a credit balance of £34,791 17s. 4d.; but it will be remembered that when the Auditor-General's report came along, it was found that he took exception to that statement, and showed that if the expenses which should have been paid at that time had been allowed for, that that surplus would really have been a deficit of over £100,000. That was a fairly strong thing for the people of Queensland to have to face in the first year of the Labour Government. We find that at the end of this year the debit balance is at least £253,000. The loss on the railways alone is £737,000, and that reminds me that the Railway Commissioner has made some fairly strong remarks in connection with this matter.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: The freights are too low, he says.

Mr. ROBERTS: On page 5 of his report, the Commissioner, dealing with the net revenue, says—

"After paying all working expenses there is a net revenue of £837,780, which is equal to £2 1s. 5½d. per centum on the total capital expended on opened and unopened lines. This sum was insufficient by £734,997 to provide working expenses and interest charges for the year."

"In anticipating the prospects for the financial year of 1916-17 I estimated, exclusive of Etheridge Railway, the gross earnings at £3,923,799, the expenditure at £2,838,507, and the interest bill at £1,556,777, which meant a loss on the year's working of £456,485."

As I say, that is a very big item. Then we turn to page 6, and he gives four reasons for this reduced revenue. One of those is floods.

We cannot blame anybody in [10 p.m.] that respect; it is to be regretted. Sometimes we have a drought and people lose what they have, and at other times we have floods. In this case the Commissioner says they occurred in all three divisions of the State. Reason No. 2 is the coal strike, "which compelled me to reduce the services during the months of November and December." No. 3 is industrial troubles, and No. 4 is reduction in shipping, so that of those four reasons, two are industrial, although I understand that the Government claimed that when they got into office they would settle all of them satisfactorily.

We had one or two references to-day to the guarantee railways; the Government have taken the credit for wiping out the guarantee. I notice that the Commissioner makes a reference to the matter on page 7. He points out the loss in his revenue, and says—

"Subsequent results would, therefore, indicate that some such system is really necessary if it is intended to regard the workings of such lines as a commercial undertaking."

Now, we know that the Government sometimes act on the advice of their Commissioner.

The PREMIER: Do you agree with that?

Mr. ROBERTS: Perhaps that is a feeler; perhaps the Government have the intention of reconsidering this matter either by a betterment tax or something else which might not be called a guarantee.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: You supported the betterment tax.

Mr. ROBERTS: No, I was not in the House. Long before I came into the House the betterment tax had gone by the board.

The PREMIER: Do you want the guarantee system reintroduced?

Mr. ROBERTS: No, I am dealing with the Commissioner's report, and I am saying that this matter—if it has not already received the attention of the Government—may do so. It is all very well to say, "We have wiped out the guarantee principle." The Commissioner points out the importance of the matter from the point of view of the general taxpayer, and says it will have to receive consideration.

The PREMIER: What do you consider should be done?

Mr. ROBERTS: I have heard that remark before, and if the interjector comes to Toowoomba when I am electioneering and asks a question, I may give it some attention. When I was speaking on the Address in Reply, I pointed out that the Government had entered upon many matters which they might well have left alone, seeing the financial position. One of those was the refreshment-rooms. We see a reference to it in this report. Nothing very much to the advantage of the general taxpayer has come about through that step. It certainly means a very large responsibility for the Commissioner and his staff, but I do not think that any hon. member is going to say that the refreshment-rooms have been in any way improved.

The HOME SECRETARY: They are certainly improved at Toowoomba.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is certainly not the experience that I gather has been obtained by people who frequent them as travellers. We find that one of the businesses of the refreshment-rooms is going to be that of a drinking saloon. A gentleman signs his name to a letter in the paper to-day to the effect that liquor is being sold after 11 o'clock at night at the Central Station, when we know that all licensees have to close their bars. We have also seen an instance of that in connection with the hotel at Babinda, where the revenue is being largely drawn from the sale of liquor, although when they foreshadowed the building of the hotel they told us that they were going to make provision for accommodation. But there has been very little result in that regard so far as we can see.

We find again that the Commissioner is evidently recognising that the huge extent of the railways will require some different method of working. I find on page 30 of the report a rather strong statement. He makes a suggestion. I do not know whether the Government are going to act upon it, though seeing that the Minister for Railways has not spoken yet he may if he speaks at a later stage give us some indication of what they are likely to do. He suggests that the

principle of co-operation might be extended. That, we know, nearly led to a stoppage of work some few weeks ago. There was a conference and ultimately, I believe, the Minister was successful in coming to an understanding. The Commissioner is asking for even something further in this regard—

"Much might be done in this direction by extending the co-operative system which has been in operation for some time in connection with the moulders' work in Ipswich shops, and of which they thoroughly approve. For instance, there is nothing to prevent the men at the various goods depôts, workshops, engine sheds, carriage sheds, maintenance and railway construction works, etc., forming themselves into co-operative groups much to their own advantage and to the benefit of the department; tendering for the work under a butty gang system. This would mean payment by results."

There is many a man in business to-day in Queensland who would like his business to be run on those lines. In our arbitration awards they do not make provision, as they do in Victoria in many instances, whereby men may get a reasonable rate for their work.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Boiled down, it is a sweating rate.

Mr. ROBERTS: If it is a sweating rate, I hope the Government will not adopt the system, as I do not want to see a sweating rate introduced. The Commissioner says—

"This would mean payment by results, and would give men a chance to use their brains as well as their muscles, and would, in my opinion, to a great extent reduce political influence and domineering unionism."

We on this side of the House say that the Minister for Railways lost control of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government lost control of you when you supported them.

Mr. ROBERTS: In what way?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You said that if Mr. Kidston imposed a land tax you would sever your connection with him straight away.

Mr. ROBERTS: As a supporter of Mr. Kidston, I supported his policy that there should be no land tax, and I asked the people of Toowoomba to give me their support on that policy. And I said that if he introduced a Bill of that kind I would oppose it, because it was against his policy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did you change your attitude in a couple of weeks?

Mr. ROBERTS: The change to which the hon. gentleman refers was made after three years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not three years; three weeks.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister wants to draw me away from the fact that the unions have got control of the department. The Commissioner says that political influence and domineering unionism would be reduced if the system he suggests were adopted.

The PREMIER: He is referring to the Terrors Creek line and those land transactions at Warwick.

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Mr. ROBERTS: I think he is referring to those terrorists whom the Premier met in conference at the Executive Buildings—the representatives of the railway strikers in the North. They were able to dominate the Premier on that occasion. Notwithstanding the fact that the hon. gentleman had stated in the public Press that they had no justification for refusing to work, when they came to Brisbane and met him in conference, they were able to domineer him to the extent that he agreed to submit the matter to further arbitration, although the strike had been an illegal one, having been resolved upon in a way which was against the rules providing for such cases; and he even agreed to submit to some one the question as to whether they should be paid for the period during which they were on strike. That is the domineering way in which they got over the Premier, the Treasurer, and the other gentlemen representing the Government on that occasion. Only a portion of the unions took a ballot, and the rest followed. The Premier, in speaking on the Requisition of Ships Bill last week, said the shipping companies had established a lockout. Yet a delegate at the Seamen's Union meeting yesterday publicly stated to his fellow-unionists that there was no lockout, but that the men had deliberately gone out in sympathy with the Sydney men who were on strike. We on this side contended that the ships stopped running because when they arrived in Brisbane the seamen left the ships.

Dealing with a broader question, I should like to ask the Government in what way workmen have benefited under the present Government as compared with their position under the previous Government?

The PREMIER: They have cheap meat, State insurance, and treatment of miners' phthisis.

Mr. ROBERTS: We know the men have better wages, but it is not the Government who have given them those better wages. It is the Arbitration Court, which has decided that under existing conditions the wages of those men are to be increased. As far as work is concerned, notwithstanding the fact that a large number of men are away on account of the war, it is much more difficult now for men to get employment than it was formerly. Brisbane is a shade better off in that respect than some other places, by reason of the fact that a large number of soldiers have drifted to the metropolis. But what is the position in Toowoomba? The Toowoomba foundry had a flourishing business in 1914-15, and representations were made to the then Minister for Works by the foundry companies of Queensland, asking for similar conditions to those which prevailed in New South Wales, Victoria, and Western Australia, and that was recommended by Judge Dickson. When dealing with the question of fixing engineers' wages, Judge Dickson said that if the matter was submitted to him, he would consider the question of making a fresh award in connection with agricultural machinery similar to that which existed in the other States. The foundry company at Toowoomba, as well as of other towns in Queensland, were anxious to establish the manufacture of agricultural machinery in Queensland, and they told the Minister for Works that advantage might be taken of Judge Dickson's suggestion, and asked that he might be requested to make a recommendation. What was the result? The engineers' union got hold of the Treasurer—

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another instance of domineering unionism which the Commissioner for Railways talks about—and the Minister would not put the question to the judge. Notwithstanding that he had given an award for [10.30 p.m.] engineers having in his mind that, as it applied to agricultural machinery and implement making, a special award would be given, yet this Minister for Works, at the request of several unionists, refused to allow the matter to be submitted to the judge. This agricultural machinery is being made in the other States of the Commonwealth, and the firm at Toowoomba which employed from 300 to 400 men are, unfortunately, only now employing fifty. That is one instance, and we could give others. What do we find in connection with this domineering unionism at Dunwich? We have heard a great deal about this Government looking after the poor and distressed. I visited Dunwich yesterday, and found several old men there complaining of the action of this Government. I said, "What is the matter? surely you are getting all you want under a Labour Government?" They appeared to look upon the late Home Secretary, Mr. Appel, and his Government, as the right people for Dunwich. They gave me the names of six or seven old men who used to do odd jobs about the institution, for which they got from £2 to £3 per month, but they are not allowed to get it now. I went to the Works Office, and found that, under the system of unionism, all these old men were to be cut out from doing this necessary work in the institution. If a hinge has to be put on a door, or a bolt on a window, a tradesman from Brisbane has to be sent, and it will take him a day to go down and a day to come back. These old men are well able to do the work, as they are old tradesmen, some of whom, through sickness, struck bad times and ultimately drifted to Dunwich. But the Government says that nobody but unionists must be employed, and it is doing these old men out of £2 or £3 a month. We have the same thing at Willowburn Asylum in Toowoomba. There are tradesmen there, but this domineering unionism has made the place so hot that all these men are passed over now to the Works Department.

Mr. DUNSTAN: The so-called domineering unionism would obviate men going to Dunwich.

Mr. ROBERTS: I fail to see what they are doing in that regard.

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I move—That this House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be the continuation of the debate on the Financial Statement, to be followed by the second readings, Local Authorities Act Amendment Bill, the Pharmacy Bill, and the Public Works Land Resumption Act Amendment Bill, respectively, and the rest of the business as it appears on the sheet.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty-four minutes to 11 o'clock.