

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER 1917

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 11 OCTOBER, 1917.

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

CLERMONT FLOOD RELIEF UNDERTAKING BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor giving his assent to this Bill.

PAPERS.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Return to an Order relative to employees at Babinda State Hotel, made by the House, on motion of Mr. Petrie, on 25th September last.

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

Fifteenth annual report of the Commissioner of Taxes on income tax.

QUESTIONS.

BORES IN BURRUM ELECTORATE.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*) asked the Minister representing the Secretary for Mines—

“1. The properties (parish and number of portion) on which bores have been put down at Torbanlea, Burrum, and Howard during the past two and a-half years?

“2. The names of the owners of each property?

“3. The number of bores put down on each property and depth of each bore?

“4. The cost of each bore?

“5. The total expenditure incurred in connection with the boring carried out on each separate property?

“6. The amount contributed by the owners of each property towards the cost of such boring?”

The PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) on behalf of the Secretary for Mines, replied—

“1 to 6. Certain properties in the districts referred to by the hon. member have been under offer to the Government. The Mines Department has made borings with a view of ascertaining the value of the properties concerned, but boring operations have ceased for some time. Particulars as to the amount expended will be disclosed when the Mines Department Estimates are under discussion.”

STATE BUTCHER'S SHOP AT WYNNUM.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

“1. Is he aware that meat for the State butcher's shop at Wynnum is being conveyed from the railway station there

to the shop by a licensed open cart, the said vehicle being used by the owner for carting all kinds of other material?

"2. If so, will he take immediate steps to have this rectified and the manager of that shop made to conform with the regulations under the Health Acts as a precaution for the people who buy meat there, and in justice to the private butchers who are made to do so under a penalty of a heavy fine?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

"1 and 2. The hon. member for the district, Mr. McMinn, reported the matter several days ago, also the Inspector of Slaughter Houses reported the matter to the Supervisor of State Shops, who immediately gave instructions to have the meat conveyed according to regulations."

ENROLMENT OF NURSES AND SOLDIERS AS ELECTORS.

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

"Will he arrange for all soldiers and nurses who have reached twenty-one years of age whilst on military service, and who are absent from the State, to be enrolled as electors who may be entitled to vote at the next ensuing general election?"

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

"This Government will take such steps to ensure that all persons who are entitled to have their names placed on the electoral roll shall be enabled to vote."

LIQUOR SOLD AT RAILWAY STATIONS AFTER HOURS.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Has he seen the statement as to liquor being on sale at the refreshment-rooms, Central Station, after 11 p.m. That a person was refused a cup of tea and eatables, being told that such was not supplied after 11 p.m.?"

"2. Will he see that the law as to sale of liquor enforced against hotel proprietors shall apply to the railway refreshment-rooms in so far as they do not conflict with the travelling public?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"1. Yes, and inquiry is being made.

"2. Yes, this is done. See paragraph 2, clause 204, Liquor Act of 1912."

CARGO ON S.S. "ALLINGA."

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. What was the general nature of the cargo sent North by the "Allinga" on her last trip?

"2. Did it include foodstuffs?

"3. What percentage of space or tonnage was allotted to spirits, wine, and beer?"

"4. What was the general character of the cargo left behind?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. To Townsville—For Railway Department, 1,413 tons coal, 17,000 feet timber, four refrigerating cars; for Mount Elliott Limited (Cloncurry), 425 tons coke. To Bowen—200 tons foodstuffs.

"2. Yes.

"3. No special space was allotted: approximately, 4 tons. The space occupied was equal to 2 per cent. of the space reserved for Bowen cargo of foodstuffs.

"4. No cargo was left behind."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

FINANCIAL POSITION OF GOVERNMENT SUGAR-MILLS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What was the financial position, respectively, of the sugar-mills controlled by the Government at the termination of the past season?"

"2. Under the existing arrangement are these mills to become the property of the cane-growers when their indebtedness to the State is paid off?"

HON. J. A. FIDELLY (*Paddington*), on behalf of the Treasurer, replied—

"1. The information may be obtained from the annual report upon Government central sugar-mills, which will be laid upon the table so soon as it is ready."

"2. Yes."

MR. HENRY'S VISIT TO BUNDABERG.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*), in the absence of Mr. Vowles (*Dalby*), asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. By whose instructions was Mr. Henry recently sent to Bundaberg?"

"2. What was the object of his visit?"

"3. What was the nature of the meeting attended by Mr. Henry at Bundaberg?"

"4. Will he lay upon the table of the House the report (if any) made by Mr. Henry, dealing with the above visit?"

"5. If no written report was furnished by Mr. Henry, will he explain to the House the nature of the verbal report made by Mr. Henry?"

"6. Who were the persons (if any) at whose request Mr. Henry was sent to Bundaberg?"

"7. What representations were made in support of such request?"

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

"1. By my instructions.

"2. To give assistance to the Department of Justice.

"3. No formal meeting was attended.

"4. No written report was made.

"5. No oral report was made, there being no need for a report to me.

"6 and 7. See No. 2."

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. STEVENS (*Rosewood*): I would like to say a few words dealing with the Financial Statement as submitted by the Treasurer.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have to inform the hon. member that he lost his right to speak on this question by moving the other night that the hon. member for Mirani be granted an extension of time.

Mr. STEVENS: I ask that I might be allowed to continue my speech to-day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has forfeited his right to speak.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I have a few brief observations to make on the Financial Statement before it goes through. The hon. member for Rosewood may have thought that he could speak to-day on the Financial Statement, but other hon. members knew that he had forfeited his right. I have listened with a good deal of interest to the speeches made already on the Financial Statement. I have been long enough in this House to know that whatever the Government in power might do, it will never meet with the approval of the Opposition. Personally, I am not too pleased to see a deficit myself. I know that when there is a deficit it does not please the Opposition, but even if there is a surplus they blame the Government just the same. Judging by the speeches made by members opposite, I am satisfied that they are the greatest lot of calamity howlers that one can meet in a day's march. Notwithstanding that the Government have done what no other Government have attempted to do in the interest of the State, still we find members opposite are dissatisfied and none of the Government's actions meet with their approval. When their speeches come to be analysed and summed up we find that they say that the wages that are being obtained at the present time are too high. Hon. members opposite do not say that directly and specifically, but that is the only inference that can be drawn from their remarks—that people are getting too high wages and that the prices that they are receiving for their products are too low for them. As a matter of fact, the prices which are being received at the present time are higher than have been received at any time in the existence of the State. (Hear, hear!) That being the case, I think I have reason to take exception to the criticism that has been made. It is a well-known fact that at the present time the primary products of this State are realising such prices as have never been realised in the existence of the State. I do not suggest that any Government likes deficits, but I am of opinion that there are times when a deficit is not as bad as some people might think. Individuals in their private capacity will sometimes face a deficit with the idea of benefiting later on. While one is always anxious to square accounts during the twelve months and to come out with a surplus, still it is better to have a deficit and make it up later on than it is to end the year with a small credit and cripple oneself in the future. It has always been laid down in this House that

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it is a good thing for the Government to spend money when things are slack outside. It is a mistake to curtail and circumscribe the operations of the Government when other people have to do the same thing. Therefore, a deficit is an infinitely better thing, disagreeable though it might be from some standpoints, than a surplus obtained by reductions and retrenchment. We remember some time ago that the Liberal Government was in the same position as this Government owing to the fact that a drought existed in the State. They not only had deficits, but they brought about a system of retrenchment throughout the length and breadth of the State. We know that when the Government start retrenching their own employees it is followed by others in their private capacity. It is infinitely worse to bring about a lot of unemployment than it is to face a deficit. My contention is that while I am not a lover of deficits, or a lover of extravagance, believing that things should be carried on carefully, it is better to face deficits and to keep people in employment receiving their wages than it is to retrench a lot of men and turn some out of employment and by that means bring about a state of affairs that is undesirable in the State. We know that when retrenchment is resorted to the tradespeople suffer and that the merchants also suffer, and there is all-round stagnation and all-round suffering which is not easy to overcome. For that reason I certainly think that the Government deserve commendation rather than condemnation, because, as a result of their actions, their own employees have not been made to specifically suffer because of the bad times through which we have passed. It has been pointed out on more than one occasion, that the present deficit in Queensland is not unique. If the whole of the States throughout the Commonwealth were not faced with deficits at the present time, perhaps it might be said that the deficit in Queensland was the result of extravagance, but, as a matter of fact, the people who are supposed to be very careful and very economical in the other States of the Commonwealth find themselves in a similar position. And not only in the Commonwealth, but throughout the whole civilised world at the present time the people find themselves in the same position, and in some places in a much worse position than we are in at the present time. In that connection it certainly does seem to me that there are no grounds for calamity-howling, or for crying down the country and trying to make it appear to outsiders that Queensland is a good place to keep away from. When one comes to think that there has been a withdrawal of some 40,000 or 50,000 wealth-producers from the State, and that there has been a withdrawal of some millions of money which would have been circulated in a variety of directions in this State, but which has been used for war purposes instead of in wealth-production, it is not to be wondered at that we find ourselves in the position we do. The wonder is that we are not feeling the position more keenly than we are at the present time. The probabilities are that we have not felt the full effects at the present time.

Mr. MURPHY: Notwithstanding all these men have left Queensland, we have had a larger revenue than ever.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is quite true, but, at the same time, we have had to do a

good deal more spending to obtain that revenue; and if those men had remained in Queensland, and other things had been normal, the revenue would probably have been greater than it has been, and the expenditure probably would have been less. As I have already pointed out, if this was the exception something might be said, but the other States have had increased revenues, but they have also had to increase their expenditure to obtain that revenue. We certainly say that is one of the things that has helped to bring about the deficit. Then, there has been a decrease in the number of stock, and while there has been an increase in the price which, to a very large extent, has made up for the loss as far as the stockowners are concerned, that increase has not compensated the Railway Department. The decrease in the number of sheep and cattle has caused a reduction in the railway revenue which has made it, instead of one of the paying concerns, one of the biggest losing concerns of the State for the time being. Therefore, I certainly think there are good, substantial causes for the present financial position; but it does seem to me that, notwithstanding that fact, the position is not one to cause despair or to cause discouragement in a country like Queensland, when we remember its recuperative powers, and when we know how quickly in times gone by we have regained our position. Then, it is a well-known fact that, as far as our railways are concerned, one of the things that has helped to put the railways in the position in which they are placed at the present time is the fact that in times gone by a very large number of railways were under construction at the one time, and, notwithstanding the fact that efforts have been made to complete those railways, there are still a number of them in the position that a large amount of money has been expended on them and yet they are bringing little or nothing in, because they have not been completed up to a point that will make them revenue-producing. One of the efforts this Government has been making, and is still making, is to construct these lines to a point where they will be revenue-producing—where they will help to earn interest on the money that has been expended on them. Then, too, as the Commissioner points out, another reason for the present position is the abolition of the guarantee system, which means a loss of £200,000. When we remember that, to a very large extent, these non-paying railways that were guaranteed were for the most part built into agricultural districts represented by hon. members sitting opposite, they should remember, at any rate, that their constituents have benefited to that extent, and not only the Government, but the Commissioner, too, is entitled to some commendation, if not some gratitude, for having relieved them of that burden. I am satisfied that, with the seasons we are getting now, and with the increase in our live stock, the time is not far distant when the railways will find sufficient traffic to again place them on a revenue-producing basis, and enable them to pay interest on the capital which has been expended upon them. As far as the employees of the Railway Department are concerned, I think they recognise that the increased wages is also one of the things that has helped to put the Government in the position of having a deficit. For many long years they were not getting what they were entitled to. They were practically in Egyptian bondage under the Liberal Administration,

and they certainly expected, and had very good grounds for expecting, that when a Labour Government came into power they would get from under the slavery and get some better recognition for the work they were doing. They certainly have done so, and I am satisfied that, as far as they are concerned, they recognise it is fair, and recognise that the Government has done something, perhaps not more than they were entitled to do, for their benefit. From that standpoint this Government certainly has nothing to be ashamed of, nothing to apologise for, and nothing to be afraid of, either here or elsewhere, as far as its own employees are concerned, and as far as the other people of the State are concerned. In dealing with the taxation proposals of the Government, most exception seems to have been taken by hon. members opposite to what is termed the land tax, but what is really the taxation of land values—an entirely different thing. Certainly, examples have been trotted out to try and convince hon. members, but, although they have been said to be concrete examples, they were certainly examples that did not reflect credit on those who adduced them, nor on those who originally were the subjects of those examples. For the most part, the speeches of hon. members opposite have been speeches, not of primary producers or farmers, but of land speculators—of men who expected to make money, not out of what they produced from the land, but out of what they could get from other people in their land transactions. I listened with a good deal of interest, and not without amusement, to the hon. member for Aubigny, and certainly the idea he conveyed to one's mind was that he was more concerned about the land speculator than he was about production. The hon. member stated that this Government, when it found itself with increased liabilities, should have looked round to see whether it could not do its work more economically, because, he said, that is what the shire councils did. He said that when the shire councils found themselves faced with increased wages they looked round to see if they could not do the same amount of work for less money, or do it in a more economical manner. If they did look round, and found that they could do that, is that not evidence that they had not been doing the work economically previously, or is it not evidence that they had been careless or indifferent in regard to their work? As a matter of fact, from my experience of shire councils and town councils, when they find themselves with an increased wages sheet, they generally increase the taxes on the ratepayers. At all times the ratepayers have to find the extra money, just the same as they have to find the extra money in other instances where increases are made. Then, the hon. member gave a rather remarkable illustration of somebody who went on to the Darling Downs and bought a farm for £14,000, spent £16,000 on improvements, and after four years sold it for £8,500. If that is a fair sample of how farmers spend their money, I am not surprised if they are in the position hon. members say they are. But I do not think that is a fair sample. Whatever might have been the cause of the loss—it would be interesting to know all the details of the case—I certainly claim that the loss was not due to the land tax. Whatever the cause might be, it certainly could not be the land tax, for the simple reason that this is the second year that the land tax has been in operation.

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Then again, if he had been paying the land tax all the time, what would the land tax have amounted to? If the £14,000 spent in the first instance had been spent on land alone—that is, the unimproved value of land—the tax would have amounted to only about £190 a year, so that would not have brought about the loss, nor would it have brought about the depreciation in the value of land that we are asked to believe takes place as soon as this tax is imposed. It has also been stated that men are leaving the land and coming into the cities because they will not work the land with the taxation imposed at the present time. Is it not a fact that in a great many instances men leave the agricultural districts and come into the cities because land is too expensive? While the father himself got his land for £1 or £1 10s. an acre, and no doubt did a good deal of hard work on it, the sons cannot get land at anything like that price. I have heard many farmers say that it is an utter impossibility for them to find the necessary money to pay the prices that are asked for land at the present time, and the consequence is that their sons drift from the country into the cities. Is it not also a fact that some of the hon. members sitting on the opposite side of the House, who talk about the price of land, came to Queensland because land in the State in which they lived was too dear and land monopoly had such a grip, and they came here, as they have repeatedly said, to look for cheap land. Men from Victoria and New South Wales for years past have been coming to Queensland because land was cheaper here than in any of the other States, but the time is fast coming, unless something is done to prevent it, when land monopoly will get a grip here, and the position will be exactly the same in Queensland as it is in the other States. The hon. member for

[4 p.m.] Drayton trotted out illustrations that are certainly a shocking example of what he said takes place on the Darling Downs, but everyone knows the hon. member takes an isolated case, concerning which he doesn't give the true facts, and he holds it out as an example of the primary producers throughout the State. The primary producer in a great many cases would repudiate that kind of thing when it was shown to him, and a great many of them—in spite of all that may be said to the contrary—are not faring too badly at the present time. I know some of them personally with land values nothing like those of whom we are told by the hon. member for Drayton—who, he states, cannot earn a living on their farm—who earn a good living, and who make, from year to year, from £600 to £700, and with very little difficulty either. Perhaps, in an exceptionally dry year, there are some people who do not make anything, but that is not a criterion. If that instance were a fair sample of what took place when people came into Queensland and spent money, certainly production would come to an end altogether. But that is not the case.

Then the question of contract as against day labour was discussed by the same hon. member, but I think it has been settled very effectively—not by this Government, but by a previous Government. The matter was discussed time and again; investigations were made, and they have been made ever since as to what could be done by contract and what by day labour: and when it comes to a question of the quality of the work done as

well as the amount done, this Government have no reason to be either afraid or ashamed of their day-labour department and the work done by it up to the present time.

On the question of taxation, it has been repeatedly said by hon. members that whoever paid the tax in the first instance, it eventually came to the workers in the long run. So far as taxes on industry are concerned there is no doubt about that statement; everybody knows that the tax is ultimately placed, not on the shoulders of those best able to bear it, but on the shoulders of those least able to bear it.

Mr. CORSEER: Then, why are you increasing it?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The land tax is an exception. One hon. member said that it is in the same category as the rest. But it is the only tax that cannot be removed, and must be paid by those on whom it is placed. That is one of the things that makes it more equitable, and one of the things which recommend it to be above any other tax. The great trouble seems to be with a lot of its opponents that it is bringing down the price of land. The land tax has everything to recommend it. After all, people who get hold of cheap land, whether it be agricultural land or building land or mineral land, find that the cheapness makes it all the easier and all the more effective when they want to make use of it; but land that is being kept out of use is bad for the individual, and is certainly bad for the community. I certainly think that one of the things which is patent to anybody who goes about with his eyes open is that the land tax has brought land into use. We know that land in the street in which these buildings stand has not been put to any use for many long years past for the simple reason that it has been exempt from any tax, and it has been left until it had a value which satisfied those who owned it. And I should just like to say in passing that the Government in power, whether it be this Government or any other Government, should get hold of all the land near to this building in William street and George street and the intervening streets, in order to make use of it for public offices instead of having to pay rents. If the land tax has done nothing else, in this connection it has done good work. There can be no question about the fact that in some instances real estate owners get hold of things that should not and do not really belong to them, and appropriate what is intended for other people altogether. As an illustration, I would like to read a short extract from a paper in reference to what is called the economic lesson of Mr. Henry Ford, the well-known motor-car manufacturer in America, who is regarded by some as a model employer and who announced that no one in his factory was to be paid less than five dollars a day. This is what this writer says—

“Mr. Henry Ford, of Ford auto-car fame, has endeavoured to set an example as an enlightened employer by paying to the employees in his Detroit factory a minimum wage of five dollars a day and sharing profits with them. On the authority of the head of Mr. Ford's sociological department, Mr. Boyd Fisher, of the Executives Club at Detroit, has made the following statement:—

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Within one week of the announcement of the Ford profit-sharing plan, the value of real estate in Detroit has jumped 50,000,000 dollars, or the value of the expected distribution for five years. The main result of the Ford 5 dollars a day plan is that living expenses have so increased in Detroit that the working man receiving 5 dollars a day finds that he cannot live as well as he could before the introduction of profit-sharing on 3 dollars a day."

That is what takes place in any and every connection. Whenever increases in wages take place, other increases are made which practically mop up the increases and make the worker very little better off, particularly as to land values. If another example is wanted, here it is, following on much the same lines—

"In other words, Detroit's land monopolists are depriving Mr. Ford's workers of what he aimed to give them when he increased wages. It is precisely the same as what happened at the Deptford Vicualling Yard, as explained by the late Lord Goschen, at the time (1899) First Lord of the Treasury, in his reply to a deputation that was demanding increased wages. He said—

'If the position of the labourers at Woolwich and Deptford was as described, it was rather due to sweating landlords than to the rate of wages. The wages had been raised 20 per cent. in the last ten years, and house rent 50 per cent. It was constantly the case in these districts that the increase of wages only led to a larger sum going into the pockets of the landlords, and he was even told that some of the men who were locally the loudest in the cry for justice to the labourers were owners of cottage property who would benefit if the wages were raised.'

So we find that in quite a number of instances like that, where the intention in the first place is that the workers shall have their conditions improved, they find that somebody else, oftentimes outside and unknown to them, is in a position practically to extract from their pockets the increase and something in addition to it. The consequence is that very naturally the workers are beginning to ask themselves what is really the cause of it, and when they find out the cause they will certainly want to know what is the remedy.

In reference to the land tax proposed in these resolutions a good deal has been said and a great outcry made. And yet it seems quite plain to me from the report of the Commissioner of Taxes that those who are said to find themselves in a very difficult position have been fairly liberally dealt with. I find that in his report he says—

"Up to 30th September, 1916, relief under section 24, 308 claims were made with tax amounting to £40,000.

"Disallowed forty-two, with tax amounting to £1,327 17s. 3d.

"Allowed in full, 401, with tax amounting to £2,035 15s. 8d.

"Allowed in part, 465, with tax amounting to £17,731 17s. 10d."

So that I am sure no real hardship has been imposed on those particular individuals by the land tax which has been imposed. On

the question of its removal, I know that a great many people imagine and say that it can be placed on the shoulders of other people. It was stated only last night that an increase in the taxation would mean an increase in rent. Nothing could be further from the truth, and I just want to read an extract from a document issued by land-owners in a campaign which took place on this particular subject when a referendum was being taken as to whether it should be paid on unimproved value or the whole value of the property, the improved as well as the unimproved value—

"Inasmuch as a tax upon land value cannot be shifted, this amounts to confiscation of a part, if not all, of the property of whoever owns land at the time the change goes into effect. A tax on land is a net deduction from the rent of the land, and when the tax is made large enough to absorb most of the rent, as it would be under any form of the single tax, the value of the land disappears."

But the question would very naturally be asked: On whom does the owner of unoccupied land put the tax? Is there anybody connected with him or anybody in league with him? And one has to imagine that people who buy expensive properties in the city and put expensive buildings on them are letting them for a less rent than they are able to get. Everybody knows that people who invest their money in real estate get the very greatest amount of rent they can get in competition with others who have property to let. In actual practice the position is the very reverse because land comes into the market as a result of the taxation, and the tendency is for rents rather to decrease than increase by reason of the number of buildings available. I know that some people think the land tax is only paid by farmers who live in the country, and yet we find that the people in the city are the people who do not forget to do some grumbling in this connection. They are the people who really pay the land tax. In a document published in Brisbane some time ago a statement was made as to the effect of this particular enactment on city properties, and some people tried to convey the idea that just a handful of people in the city are the people who are paying the tax. But they also, perhaps unintentionally, show that perhaps a handful of people in the city own the land value of the State, and not the great bulk of the people. Amongst other things in this document in reference to the taxation of land values they say—

"But it is notorious that with the steadily increasing burden of taxation, specially directed against this description of property, no man in the possession of capital would think of buying city property in order to improve it with costly buildings for letting purposes. Some of the ventures in this direction which preceded this added taxation will assuredly act as deterrents to any one so inclined. City improvements will necessarily be retarded and city rents enhanced."

The tendency is just the reverse because more land will be available. It is also having this effect—that all the business of the city is not going to be concentrated in one particular street, as it has been in the past. It is going to spread, and other streets which have not been regarded as business streets will be

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brought into prominence. Business places are being put up in them because land is cheaper there, and I think that all round a benefit will take place rather than otherwise. After quoting from the report of the Commissioner of Land Taxation to show how a handful of people pay what they regard as most of this tax, they go on to show that when it comes to a question of land values and the natural resources of the State, they are in the hands of a very few people indeed.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Have you read Knibbs's latest figures on land taxation in the July number?

MR. WINSTANLEY: No, I have not; but, judging from what I have read of Knibbs on previous occasions, I am doubtful whether anything that Knibbs would say would contradict these facts. They point out in this statement that 11,377 taxpayers owned land of a total value of £5,710,383. The average value was £501, and the average tax 16s. 8d. They further state that 3,793 taxpayers owned land of the total value of £3,782,047. The average value was £997, and the average tax £4 7s. 8d. Following down the list, we find that the number of taxpayers decreases, while the average land value and the average tax increases. The last item on the list is fourteen taxpayers owning land of a total value of £1,822,295, or an average value of £130,164, with an average tax of £2,970. I certainly think that the handful of people who own that large land value are in the position to pay the tax. The land tax is one which does not affect industry; it does not hamper or hinder industrial enterprise in any way. On the contrary, it has just the reverse effect: it makes land available, and helps rather than injures industry. If the tax hampered industry, something might be said against it, but, in my opinion, it is one of the most equitable and one of the most reasonable taxes ever imposed, as it taxes neither wages nor industry. If the effect of the tax were such as some members opposite would have us believe, a country which depended entirely upon that form of taxation for its revenue would be in a very serious position. We often hear about concrete examples, but when they are given to us we find that they are about as nebulous as the clouds in the sky. However, I have a concrete example, which I should like to give to the Committee. It is certainly an example of a small country, but it is just as valuable as an illustration as a more thickly populated country. It is taken from a book called "Democracy and Empire," which I got from the library. The main object of the writer is to prove that, under a democratic Government, an Empire could not be built up and sustained. He says—

"The Federated Malay States have been able to effect enormous developments, the creation of an efficient civil service, the construction of excellent roads, the building of a well-equipped railway system, the erection of splendid residence for the Sultan, and of public offices, at Kuala Lumpur, Taiping Serantium Klang, Pekan, and elsewhere, the construction of waterworks, and deep-water ports and other works of public utility. All this has been done without resorting to public loans, being a feat almost, if not quite, unparalleled in the annals of British colonial administration, and it is satisfactory to note that

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a similar policy is being followed in the protected independent States. So prosperous are the Federated Malay States that they have advanced over one million and a half sterling to Lahore for the construction of the railway through that State, and have lent £4,000,000 to Siam to build a railway in Southern Siam to connect with the Federal system on the northern frontiers of the native States of Kalantan and Perlis. On 31st December, 1912, the Federated Malay States had a net surplus of £7,500,000, some invested in gold and some in Indian securities. The above taken from an official account shows clearly what can be done by honest, clearheaded administration."

I do not know how it is—whether it is because the author does not know or does not want to say—but he does not explain how it was done or how it happened. I learned from other sources long ago how it happened. In the early days, a British administrator who knew the fundamental principles of taxation and administration was in charge of the Federated Malay States, and he took for the community that which belonged to the community—namely, the land values, and it is those land values that have enabled these people to do all the work mentioned without any other taxes whatever. They have no other tax in the States, except a small export tax on tin. Their land tax has enabled them to do all this work from revenue, to pay their way, and to build up a splendid surplus of over £7,000,000, which—as this is a remarkable thing for any country—is invested on security in other countries. That is a concrete example that is well worth studying, and it goes to show very clearly what can be done in this particular direction. I certainly think that what has been done there can be done elsewhere. There is no question that the value which is given to land in any community is given to it by the people who lived in that particular community, and no wrong is done to anyone when those values are taken for public use. As far as the land tax proposals of the Government are concerned, I think they are very just and equitable, and that the Government have nothing to be ashamed or afraid of in connection with them. On the contrary, I believe they will reap the credit of their action, as these taxes will make it easier for those who want to produce wealth from the land to get hold of it and make use of it. There are several other things that I had intended to deal with, but most of them can be dealt with just as well on the Estimates as on the Financial Statement. I certainly think that the Government have, in spite of a great many obstacles and difficulties, done good work during their time, and I am quite satisfied what the result will be when they appeal to the electors at the next election.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. WELLINGTON (*Charters Towers*): I desire to say a few words before the Financial Statement goes through. Last session, when I spoke on the Financial Statement, I advocated the consolidation of the local authorities in various parts of Queensland, especially in the Charters Towers district. The Charters Towers district had four local authorities—the Queenton Shire Council, the Water Board, the City Council, and the Dalrymple Shire Council. If the three bodies were amalgamated, the result would be a

great saving to the people of Charters Towers. The people there think that the Charters Towers Water Board should be incorporated in the greater Charters Towers scheme. During the last three years the arrears owing to the Government by the Waterworks Board have increased by £8,000, and now stand at £10,377. If matters are allowed to go on in this way, the position will be that the people of Charters Towers will not be able to pay the rates, as they cannot bear an increase in the rates. The debit balance in the consolidated loan on the 30th June last was £54,045 12s. 2d., the debit balance on the Aerial Tramway and Venture Meter was £997 4s., and the debit balance on the West Burdekin Tramway on the same date was £5,951 13s. 2d., making a total of £60,974 9s. 4d. The people in Charters Towers—I am led to believe—want an opportunity to take a ballot on the question, but the members of the board do not want to grant that ballot till the next election, so that the people will not have an opportunity of voting on the subject.

I should like now to say a few words about mining. During last year the Minister for Mines was good enough to grant to the mining community at Charters Towers a drainage board. Various mines in the district have been flooded, and some were about to close down, and had notified other mining companies that they intended to cease operations. The Minister, however, granted a drainage board and a subsidy of £1,500 a year, and this enabled the companies to keep going. With regard to loans in aid of deep sinking, I find that the advances approved of during the financial year 1916-17 are as follows:—Gympie, £3,700; Chillagoe, £250; Charters Towers, £2,375; Mount Morgan, £100; Herberton £642 10s.—a total of £7,067 10s. The mining fields of Queensland are very thankful to the Government for such assistance; but I contend that they should receive more consideration at the hands of this or any other Government. Three mining companies at Charters Towers received subsidies from the Government, and those mines are paying dividends. In February, 1912, the Papuan (Moonstone) Mine received an advance of £489 5s. They repaid that sum, with interest amounting to £11 9s. 2d., in December of the same year. In 1912 they crushed 856 tons of ore, valued at £5,131; in 1913 they crushed 1,802 tons, valued at £12,448; in 1914 they crushed 1,275 tons, valued at £9,952; in 1915 they crushed 2,618 tons, valued at £20,813; and in 1916 they crushed 1,960 tons, valued at £12,986. The total quantity of ore raised during those years was 8,511 tons, and the total value of that ore was £61,330. The company paid in dividends £16,800. In 1913 the proprietors of Clark's Gold Mine, Moonstone Lease, received an advance of £1,300, and they repaid that advance, with interest amounting to £109 16s. 1d., in August, 1915. During the year 1914 they raised 348 tons of ore, of the value of £4,652; in 1915 they raised 1,241 tons, of the value of £12,509; in 1916 they raised 1,899 tons, valued at £15,558; and in 1917 up till August they raised 911 tons, valued at £15,786. The total quantity of ore raised during those years was 4,399 tons, valued at £48,505; and during the same period the sum of £5,625 was paid to the shareholders in dividends. In February, 1913, the Bonnie Dundee Company received an advance of £995 11s. 8d., which was repaid in February, 1916, with interest

amounting to £114 7s. 4d. In 1915 they raised 1,032 tons of ore, valued at £5,479; in 1916 they raised 3,830 tons, valued at £20,198; and in 1917 up till August last they raised 1,215 tons, valued at £5,686. The total quantity of ore raised during those three years was 6,077 tons, producing £31,363 worth of gold. The total amount advanced to those companies was £2,784 16s. 8d., and they produced £141,198 worth of gold. These figures show that the various mining companies and prospectors in Queensland deserve some consideration at the hands of the Government.

With regard to the State assay offices, I may say that I have visited the Charters Towers Assay Office on several occasions, and have found that the students are very well pleased with the manner in which it is conducted. I have also been to the Cloncurry Assay Office. Regarding this office, the "Queensland Government Mining Journal" of 14th July, 1917, says—

"The usefulness of the State Assay Office established at Cloncurry about a year ago has exceeded expectations, one result being the payment of better prices for ore to the miners by the smelting works on the field. At Mareeba a similar office has been opened, and will, no doubt, prove of great benefit to miners in far Northern localities.

"That the Government Assay Office established at Cloncurry is fulfilling expectations and giving every satisfaction to the 'gouger' is evidenced by the fact that during the past three months 266 parcels of ore went through the office, the total tonnage of ore being 2,182 tons. The following work was also done during the period:—6 check assays, 10 assays under regulation 5, 191 free assays, and 48 mineral determinations. The revenue received was £681,18s. 9d."

What would be of great advantage to mining in North Queensland would be the development of the Bowen coalmines. We understand from geological reports that the Bowen coal is the best coal in Australia, and if the Bowen coalfields were opened up it would be of great advantage to that part of Queensland and also to the Northern gold and copper fields. I hope the Government will use every effort to have that railway constructed as soon as possible.

A good deal has been said about State butchers' shops, and I will give the prices charged for meat in private shops on Charters Towers, where the meat is grown, as compared with the prices in Brisbane. They are as follows:—

	Brisbane. Ch. Towers.	
	per lb.	per lb.
<i>Beef.</i>		
	<i>d.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Fillet	8	10
Rump	7½	9
Sirloin roast	6½	8
Beef steak	5½	7
Prime rib roast	4½	6½
<i>Mutton.</i>		
Legs	7	8
Loins	7	7½
Loin chops	7	8½
Hind quarters	6½	7½

In addition ¼d. per lb. for booking.

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The establishment of a State butcher's shop in Charters Towers would be beneficial to the miners and to all workers concerned. I would like to say a few words in connection with the State Children Department, and I take strong exception to a certain statement that was put forth in the annual report of that department. On page 17 of the report, it says—

MINING TOWNSHIPS.

“Life in a mining township at any time is undesirable for children, and when the father is dead it is still more undesirable. When there are no older children, I think the giving of money assistance should not be approved. The mother remains because she lived there in her husband's time, and probably makes her living by doing washing, which she can get and do anywhere. The home conditions are simply awful, and the social, moral, and religious outlook about as bad as can be imagined. The atmosphere of these homes and the atmosphere of our institutions and foster-homes is so different, that only those who move in them can understand and appreciate.”

I take strong exception to that, because I recognise that the men and women who live on our goldfields are as good—morally, socially, and intellectually—as any other person.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WELLINGTON: I have every respect for Mr. Salton, who visits Charters Towers, but I take exception to that portion of his report. (Hear, hear!)

In regard to workers' compensation, I may say that I have had considerable experience in regard to the Mining Accident Association, having been secretary for fifteen and a-half years, and I maintain that State workers' compensation is 100 per cent. better than that provided by private enterprise. While the State has practically doubled the amount of compensation, the premium is still the same. Then, again, there is no trouble whatever with regard to State compensation; you lodge your claim and the money is paid. There is a schedule showing the amount payable for different accidents, such as so much for the loss of an eye, so much for the loss of a limb, and so on. There is no trouble in filling in the application, and the money is paid straight away. I think the Home Department should be congratulated on the way in which they are assisting those who suffer from miners' phthisis, as the following summary will show:—

“Number in receipt of allowance on 30th September, 1917	118
Amount of allowance paid monthly 118 x £2 3s. 4d.	£255 13s. 4d.
Number of married men with children under 16 years of age	39
Number of cases in which wives receive State children allowance	12
Amount paid monthly from State Children Department £70 17s. 0d.	
Number of fresh applications since 1st July, 1917	8
Deaths since 1st July, 1917	8”

I understand that a number of persons are receiving assistance who are not really suffering from phthisis, but are suffering from

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a chest complaint. I do not wish to detain the House any longer, but I intend to make some further remarks when the Estimates are under consideration. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I have listened very attentively to the debate. I have listened to hon. members opposite talking about millions, and I have come to the conclusion that they are not authorities when they are dealing with millions.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Are you prepared to give your reasons for that statement?

Mr. COLLINS: In the course of my remarks I will make reference to the taxation proposals of the Government which are contained in the Financial Statement, and will give reasons why those proposals should be passed by this House, and, I hope, passed by another part of the Legislature. Like most hon. members, I want, first of all, to deal with matters affecting my own electorate. As hon. members are well aware the hold-up of the ships has seriously affected the progress of the Bowen electorate. My electorate is a growing electorate—an electorate which has over 1,000 more voters on the roll than it had when I was returned to Parliament. I do not belong to the class to which hon. members belong—a class that is always wailing and crying out that the country is ruined.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No, because you are ruining the country.

Mr. COLLINS: The part of Queensland that I have the honour to represent is growing; it is not showing a decline, notwithstanding the fact that I have the honour to represent it. The point I want to make is this: That the hold-up of the ships by the few persons who own the ships of this Commonwealth—after all, they are only a few—is seriously affecting my electorate. I have received a letter this morning from the secretary of the Queensland Fruitgrowers' Industrial Trading Society, in which he points out that he estimates that the loss to the fruitgrowers in the Bowen district is £25,000. That is the loss they have suffered owing to the stoppage of communication between Bowen and the South. Most people know that Bowen is noted for the production of tomatoes. Those tomatoes in certain months of the year realise very high prices in the Sydney market, and, unfortunately, this hold-up of the shipping took place just at the time when they would have realised a good price for their tomatoes and other fruits. We all regret that they should be suffering a loss, and in my opinion the only solution, so far as shipping goes—whether we do it in this session of Parliament or whether we do it in future sessions—will be the nationalisation of shipping or the State ownership of ships. The hold-up of the shipping has made every man who represents a Northern constituency think, and I claim that this Government, even if they were to hang up some of the railways in the Southern portion of Queensland—

Mr. MURPHY: Oh! and Opposition dissent.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes. Even if they were to hang up some of the lines here, they should push on with the North Coast line for all they are worth.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You are too selfish.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not selfish at all, because here in the South, owing to being

close to the seat of government, a large number of lines have been constructed that are not paying at all.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Look at the mass of population here.

At twenty minutes to 5 o'clock,

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

Quorum formed.

Mr. COLLINS: I am sorry there were so many members absent that it was necessary to ring the quorum bell. I suppose they were watching the proceedings in the House of destruction—the House that destroys legislation. In the interests of the North the Government should push on with the North Coast railway and link it up from Brisbane to Townsville. The result would be that the North Coast railway would then be a paying one. In my opinion it would then pay right from Brisbane to Townsville. The leader of the Opposition said I was very selfish when I said hang up some of the southern lines, and he said, "Look at the population here." I would like to point out that unless there are more railways constructed in North Queensland we cannot expect to get the population there that we have in the South. I have seen a considerable portion of the far North, and I know that the population is not increasing at the rate it is in the South, and I claim that it will be the duty of any Government to spend large sums of money in the North, because then we will get a similar population to what you have in the south. If we had that railway completed, then we would do away to some extent with the present shipping monopoly, inasmuch as they would not be in the position to charge the freights and fares they are charging at the present time. Only a week or two ago the Bowen fruitgrowers were able to ship their fruit to Brisbane, and then it had to be railed from Brisbane to Sydney. I reason it out that if we had that railway right through to Bowen, the fruitgrowers of Bowen would have been able to send their fruit right through from Bowen to Sydney by rail. (Hear, hear!) I would urge upon the Government the advisability of starting the railway from Proserpine towards Midge Point. (Hear, hear!) The railway is going north from Mackay towards Midge Point, and the distance from Proserpine to Midge Point is 21 miles, and there are only a few gaps to build in the Normanby electorate south of Mackay; and when those are built we will then have the line completed from Brisbane to Townsville, and then we will commence to get settlement in the North. (Hear, hear!) We have a good illustration of the settlement that will take place when we look at the settlement that is taking place between Brisbane and Gympie. As one who knows Queensland fairly well, and who has travelled practically all along our coast from Brisbane to Townsville, I claim that the land from Proserpine to Townsville is a long way superior to the land from Brisbane to Bundaberg. And the North can never develop as it should develop until that railway is completed, so as to make travelling easy, so that people here in the south can realise what the North is like, because there are many people who will not travel by boat who would, if the railway were constructed, travel by train. Then again, I would urge upon the Government to commence as soon as the crushing season is over, because I am

governed by the laws of common sense, and I know at the present moment there are thousands of men working in the canefields, and I do not want to withdraw them from the canefields on to the railway; but as soon as the crushing season is over it is the duty of this Government to put on anything from 500 to 1,000 men to construct the railway from Merinda to the Bowen Coalfield. (Hear, hear!) There are a few men working on that railway at the present moment, but as soon as the men are finished in the canefields they should be transferred on to the railway to push the line on to the coalfield instead of carrying coal from the south. According to our Government Geologist, we have one of the biggest coalfields in Queensland there.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do you know why they are carrying coal to the Burrum?

Mr. COLLINS: I am not concerned with the Burrum. The hon. member for Burrum can look after the Burrum. He is a fairly good talker. At any rate, I am trying to point out to the Committee and to the country at large that we have one of the biggest coalfields in the North. Mr. Dunstan claims that the Bowen Coalfield is a continuation of the Dawson Coalfield. There may be breaks in between, such as big faults that anyone who has followed mining knows occur, but still, it is a continuation, and had there been Governments in the past who had considered North Queensland, I would not have to get up in my place and urge on the Government the building of that railway to the coalfield. It should have been built long ago.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We made every preparation for it, and this Government ought to have it built by now.

Mr. COLLINS: This Government passed the railway in the first session. When I suggested anything about the railways here in the South being discontinued so as to build the North Coast line, the hon. member said I was ungenerous and unkind. The point I am making is this: That this Government is doing all it is possible for a Government to do, and I am not asking them to put on 1,000 men just at the present moment, because, if they did, it would withdraw the men from the canefields, and there would be a howl, and we would have the hon. member for Burrum or the hon. member for Mirani moving the adjournment of the House to call attention to the fact that the sugar-growers could not get men.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I do not agree with you that the Government is doing all that it should do.

Mr. COLLINS: I would not expect the hon. member to agree with me; but I was just making reference to the fact that this Government had to charter the "Allinga" to carry coal and coke to the North to enable the great Cloncurry mines to work.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What else did it carry?

Mr. COLLINS: It carried something else besides that. It carried 200 tons of foodstuff for Bowen and looked after that part of Queensland I have the honour to represent. The point I am trying to make is this, that there ought not to have been the need to charter the "Allinga" had past Liberal Governments done justice to the Bowen electorate or to the North in general, which has never received justice. As I said on one

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occasion in this House, in my opinion the North will never get justice done to it until it gets a Parliament of its own. Very few people realise that Bowen is 710 miles north of Brisbane. We are not able to visit our electorate every week-end as the hon. member for Toowoomba is able to do, but if the railway was built we might be able to visit them a little more than we do at the present time. At any rate, as time rolls on, I have no doubt that North Queensland will have a Government of its own, and the North will be developed. I want to make reference to the good work the Government is doing in connection with the Inkerman irrigation scheme. I received a letter from a gentleman who resides there the other day, and he said the Government were doing splendid work in connection with the irrigation scheme at Inkerman. Most people know, or ought to know, that from Bowen to Townsville, or a bit beyond Townsville, there is what is known as the dry 'belt, and to make cane-growing a success in that dry belt we must have irrigation, and this Government is going to spend £130,000 on an irrigation scheme for Inkerman. But, unfortunately for that district, two of the biggest mills in the district are under private control, or, in other words, I believe they are under the control of one man. The position at Inkerman, at the present time, is that the growers there have been notified by Mr. Drysdale, the owner of the Inkerman and Pioneer mills, that he will only be able to crush half their crop. As most members of the House know, they passed through a very severe time owing to the drought, and it will be a big loss to the sugar growers in that part of Queensland when they are only going to get half their crop off.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Why is he only going to crush half?

Mr. COLLINS: I am not in a position, may be, to answer that. I should say this; that the hon. member's Government had something to do with the Inkerman estate, and I am not too sure that they secured the rights of the Inkerman growers so far as the Inkerman mill goes.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I think so.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not think the hon. member's Government secured their rights when they got them to settle on the Inkerman estate; that is, the late Government allowed John Drysdale to build his mill there, and should have seen that the Inkerman growers received preference. And now John Drysdale is drawing a lot of his supply from the other side of the river and leaving the Inkerman farmers' cane stand over. As we all know, in my district and in some other parts of Queensland, there are tenant farmers, and I suppose Mr. Drysdale is crushing the cane from his tenant farmers so that he will get the rents put into his pocket.

Colonel RANKIN: Would you deny the tenant farmers the opportunity to get their cane crushed?

Mr. COLLINS: I would not deny the tenant farmer anything at all. What I do deplore is that in a State like Queensland we should have tenant farmers, where men have to pay some other men for the right to live. Nevertheless, we have to deal with things as they are, and what I want to point out to the Government is this: that they must consider the advisability of building more mills in that part of Queensland, because we all know with irrigation on the Inkerman

estate it will mean a large increase in the supply of cane, and while the Inkerman mill is one of the largest mills in Queensland, that is the position at the present time. I claim that the Government who took over the Inkerman estate—which was not this Government—should have provided a mill for the Inkerman estate. It would have paid them to do that. They should have so fixed things up that the first cane to be crushed at the Inkerman mill should be the cane grown at Inkerman. Here those men have come through a severe drought, and they are now told they can only have half their crop crushed. I am well aware that cane can stand over, but that is not as good as if it is cut now, because the farmers would not make up with one crop what they would get with two, as every canegrower knows. I am pleased at the way the Government have treated the settlers on the Inkerman estate. Owing to the fact that they are only going to get half their crop crushed—some of them have not had any crushed yet, and it will have to be crushed between now and the end of the year—the Government have allowed the rent to stand over until the 31st March next year. I am pleased to know the Government has done that, because we have been told from time to time that this Government has no sympathy with the man on the land. Why, we are interested in the man on the land, and we are looking after the man on the land. I want also to say a few words in reference to minerals in my electorate, which is a little larger than Belgium, and is, I suppose, far richer in natural resources than ever Belgium was. I claim in connection with our Mines Department—and when I was in this House before I claimed the same—that we have never had sufficient geological geologists. We should have a far larger geological staff to make an examination of the deposits. In my electorate only a short time ago we had an examination made by Mr. Dunstan, State Geologist, in connection with a huge limestone deposit within a few miles of Bowen—Ben Lomond. The Proserpine farmers, a short time before this discovery was made known to the people, waited on the Treasurer to ask for an advance of £1,000, to a company, to work the limestone deposits in the islands off Mackay, and yet eight or nine miles distant from the Proserpine railway we have this huge limestone deposit. I hope this Government will see that that deposit remains in the possession of the State so as to enable the farmers to get cheap lime. I do not want the same thing to happen as happened in regard to Iron Island, where a Charters Towers company received the rights, with the result that the Mount Morgan Company for years has been paying a royalty to the Charters Towers Company for the right to mine iron on Iron Island. What I want to see this Government do is to retain possession of that big limestone deposit and see that the farmers of the Proserpine district and the Bowen district in general, and maybe other parts of Queensland, get cheap lime. Then again, to further

my argument about not having a [5 p.m.] large enough geological staff, it is only the other day that a discovery was made on Holbourne Island, eighteen miles from Bowen. We are told that it contains phosphates, and that goes to show that had we had a thorough examination of the islands from Brisbane right away to Thursday Island, we would have known that this valuable deposit existed long ago; and I

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hope the Government will—I am sure they will—be very careful in not giving possession of that island, until such time as we have had a thorough examination of it, to any company or private persons. (Hear, hear!) We all know that the Germans before the war owned Ocean Island, with its large guano deposit. One writer says that there is enough guano on that island to pay for the cost of the war, so far as Australia is concerned. Maybe we have similar deposits on our Queensland coast—I do not mean deposits of guano necessarily, but other deposits of equal value—which can only be discovered by a close examination of the several islands by geologists. I am satisfied from my travels in the North, with its large mineral deposits, not only in my own electorate, but in other electorates, that we have not a geological staff large enough to examine, say, the Chillagoe district, let alone the whole of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) Then, again, in my electorate we have magnesite. I read the other day that the Newcastle Steel Company obtained an option over a mine at Mount Pring and had made arrangements to take 500 tons of ore a week for use in smelting.

During this debate a good deal of capital has been made of the fact that our railways last year showed a loss. Hon. members seem to put that down to bad management on the part of this Government. Hon. members opposite do not seem to realise that in Queensland to-day, owing to the war, we have 50,000 fewer men than would be here if it were not for the war; 50,000 of our best wealth-producers are no longer in the State. That means that there must be a decrease in the traffic on our railways; that is only common sense.

Colonel RANKIN: But the railway revenue has increased.

Mr. COLLINS: While the railway revenue may have increased, hon. members should not lose sight of the fact that it would have increased a great deal more had these men been in the State and carried on production. No one imagines for one moment that the 50,000 men who left Queensland were idlers.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: How would it have increased if you had sound administration?

Mr. COLLINS: Sound administration? What astounds me when I travel through the State is that the railways are paying as well as they do, considering that 50,000 men have left the State. If those men were only producing on an average £3 per week, it would mean £150,000 per week more production. That is one of the reasons why our railways are not paying. I am not going to cry out about any Government in Australia having a deficit, for this reason—that I am astonished that there should be one Government which has not a deficit when you consider that 350,000 wealth-producers have left our shores. Any man of common sense must realise that that means a loss in wealth production and less traffic on the railways, and that the Government are passing through a time of financial stress—both Federal and State. At any rate, while those 50,000 men may have left Queensland, it does not follow that wealth-production is not as great as it was last year, because wealth-production is increasing year by year by leaps and bounds.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: No.

Mr. COLLINS: I will prove that is correct before I sit down, and I am also going to

prove before I sit down that the wealthy in this State are getting wealthier. Not that I am going to blame the leader of the Opposition for that. I am going to put the blame on the way society is constituted at the present time—the way wealth is produced, and the way it is distributed. The hon. member for Burrum the other night gave me a short lecture on political economy. There is a great difference between the political economy of the hon. member and my own. I have studied working-class economics. The hon. member for Burrum, judging by his speeches in this House, has studied what I term capitalistic economics. He belongs to what are generally termed “the robbers”; I belong to what are generally termed “the robbed.” I was not “born with a silver spoon in my mouth,” like the hon. member for Burrum. You see, I know something of the history of the hon. member for Burrum. I knew the hon. member for Burrum in 1886, when I had my swag on my back passing through the Burrum. I was quite a young man, and he was not a bad-looking chap at that time—I recognised him years afterwards. It is no use him getting up in this House and telling me I do not understand economics. I understand economics too well for the hon. member. I understand how men become wealthy; a lot of men do not understand that. The reason they become wealthy is that they take the labour of other people, or, in other words, the more men you can employ the wealthier you become. If you employ 100 men who produce 10s. a day, and you pay them 8s. a day, you can easily become wealthy. And the more men you can employ under the capitalistic system the wealthier you become. That is how some of these men have got to be wealthy in the State of Queensland—not by their own exertions or brain power, because some of the greatest nincompoops I have ever met have got wealthy simply because they were allowed to get possession of a certain area of coal or gold country, or some other kind of country. They then sank a shaft, employed men, and became very wealthy.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Do you advocate a return to primitive society?

Mr. COLLINS: No, I do not. I advocate going forward to a better state of society. What I look forward to is the day when there will be no parasites, when there will not be a crowd of idlers, as it were, taking the greatest bulk of the wealth of the country and the mass of the people producing the wealth of the country which those parasites take.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You would not advocate the employment of capital?

Mr. COLLINS: Nobody heard me say a word about capital. I am not talking about capital; I am talking about the capitalist, the man who robs the worker of part of his produce, and I am going to prove that the capitalists of Queensland—notwithstanding that they have a Labour Government in power—are still able to become wealthier. After all, I am one of those who believe in what Sir Samuel Griffith said in 1888. I was a young man at the time, and he made a wonderful impression upon me. Perhaps that is why I am in this House to-day. He said—

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

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. Collins.]

Mr. COLLINS: And that is the problem for the younger men on this side of the House to study and solve. We have not solved it yet by a long way, although it is quite true that we are going step by step towards it. So, when I was contesting the Bowen election, I did not deceive my electors. I used these words—

“We cannot right the wrongs of centuries in one session of Parliament, nor many sessions. The Labour Government, to do effective work, must remain in office for a period of three Parliaments at least, or nine years.”

And I repeat that to-night. We have been told by a gentleman of the name of Murphy in Victoria that wages have not increased at the same rate as the cost of living. Well, I suppose most of us know that. Long before Mr. Murphy wrote his pamphlet or delivered his address I argued on similar lines, and I have been looking up my speech in this House in 1911 in which I did so.

Hon. J. TOLME: You must be surprised to find him catching up.

Mr. COLLINS: It shows that I was six years ahead. At any rate, he is doing good work, because a lot of people are too lazy to use their thinking powers. We have been told by our Opposition friends that we are ruining the farmer.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: The leader of the Opposition says “Hear, hear.” I have not had much time to study the paper which the Assistant Minister for Justice tabled this afternoon—that is, the income tax report; but it is a very interesting report, and I wish I had had more time to study it. At any rate, I made a short study of it with my friend the hon. member for Fitzroy—while we were listening to other members speaking—and I find that no fewer than 726 more of the farmers, whom we are out to ruin, paid income tax during the past year than in 1915. Is that ruining them? According to the report of the Income Tax Commissioner, the number of farmers and fruitgrowers who paid income tax in 1915 was 3,167; the total amount of their incomes was £979,224, which works out at an average income of £309. According to the report tabled this afternoon, the number of farmers and fruitgrowers who paid income tax in 1916 was 3,893, and the total amount of income on which they paid tax was £1,360,550, which works out at an average of £349 per taxpayer, or an increase of £40 over the average for 1915, and an increase of £381,326 in the aggregate incomes. We want the farmers of Queensland to know that this Government, who, we are told by members opposite, are out to ruin the farmers, have made it possible for 726 more farmers to pay income tax in 1916 than the number who paid that tax in 1915. I hope the farmers and fruitgrowers of the State will realise that fact. When the leader of the Opposition was sitting on this side of the House in 1911, out of the total number of farmers in the State, only 1,400 paid income tax. I am not saying that farmers are well off. I find that in my speech in 1911 I said they were not well off, but I am satisfied that if they keep this Government in power for nine years there will be a far larger number of them paying income tax than are paying that tax at the present time.

[Mr. Collins.]

Now I want to deal with the pastoralists.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: They are getting ruined too, are they not?

Mr. COLLINS: Ruined! No. We are told by members opposite that we are ruining all the primary industries, and I suppose the pastoral industry will be classed as one of the primary industries. No doubt the leader of the Opposition has great sympathy for the pastoralists, because I am satisfied they contribute largely to the funds of the party sitting on that side of the House. The number of pastoralists who paid income tax in 1915 was 1,826, and the total amount of their income was £2,828,622, which works out at an average income of £1,549. The report of the Commissioner of Income Tax for 1916-17, which was presented this afternoon, shows there were 2,522 pastoralists who paid income tax on a total income from property and personal exertion of £4,084,531. The average income of those pastoralists was £1,619 per annum. The increase in the number of pastoralists who paid income tax last year, as compared with the number who paid income tax in 1915, was 696, and the increase in the total income was £1,255,859. And yet members opposite cry out because this Government required them to provide 12,000 tons of meat for the people at 3½d. per lb.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Seven thousand tons.

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, 7,000 tons. It should have been 17,000 tons. Before long we shall have to face the question as to whether the pastoralists are to control the people of Queensland or the people of Queensland are to control the pastoralists. By establishing State stations we are, to all intents and purposes, saying that the people of Queensland shall control the pastoralist, but what the Government have done in this connection is only a little drop in the ocean as yet. Everyone knows the attitude I have taken up right through this war. These pastoralists, whose incomes increased last year to the extent of £1,255,859 in the aggregate, are the men who howl about the shearer getting a high price for shearing their sheep, and about the rouseabout receiving big wages. Fancy 2,522 persons taking £4,084,531 of the total income of the population. According to Knibbs, the total wealth produced in Queensland in 1909 was £26,526,000. If we take the total wealth produced last year at £40,000,000, which is a rough estimate, we find that 2,522 persons took one-tenth of the total of the wealth produced in this State. From time to time, members on the opposite side of the House have said that we are taxing the people. I say that this Government are not taxing the people, but are taxing a few of the people. Do you mean to tell me that these pastoralists, with their enormous incomes, should not be made to pay more towards the cost of carrying on the government of the country than they are paying at the present time? I say they should be made to pay a great deal more than they are paying at present. We all know that last year the Legislative Council rejected the proposal of the Government to tax incomes of £3,000 and over. According to the report of the Income Tax Commissioner the number of persons having incomes of over £3,000 in 1915 was 307, and the total amount of their incomes was £2,012,815, or an average of £6,556 per taxpayer. In 1916 the number of persons having incomes of over £3,000 was

385, and the total amount of their incomes was £2,748,074, or an average of £7,085 each. In other words, the number of persons in receipt of incomes above £3,000 increased by seventy-eight, the total amount of their incomes increased by £736,259, and the average increase per taxpayer was £529. We can understand, therefore, why the legislators in another Chamber rejected the proposal to tax incomes over £3,000. I am surprised at any man who represents a farming electorate allying himself with the pastoralists and the very wealthy classes in Queensland. Those 385 taxpayers have taken more of the wealth produced in Queensland than half the farmers and fruitgrowers have received. It was stated yesterday in the other House that it is not a party Chamber. That is quite true; it is not a party Chamber; it is only a one-party Chamber—a Tory party Chamber.

Hon. J. TOLME: You must not speak disrespectfully of the other Chamber.

Mr. COLLINS: I am not speaking disrespectfully of that Chamber, but I say the sooner it is wiped out, the better it will be for the government of Queensland, and if I had my way it would disappear to-morrow. I do not believe, and never have believed, in the two-Chamber system. I do not believe in having two Chambers in the Federal Parliament. I believe in one Chamber alone. I do not believe in government by contradiction, and that is what the two-Chamber system means. I have pointed out that a few wealthy people—385 persons—take about one-fifteenth of the total wealth produced in Queensland. It is just as well that some of the younger members of the House should study this question, because we are approaching a condition of things similar to that which exists in the United States of America and on the continent of Europe. Under the capitalist system which is in vogue, wealth accumulates in the hands of the few; they get the bulk of the wealth of the State. That is entirely wrong, and we want to realise that so long as there exists a system under which a few exploiters can exploit the many, as they are doing to-day, so long will the mass of wealth-producers fail to get what is their due. We find that there are only 23,560 persons who pay income tax in Queensland, and yet members opposite charge us with taxing the people. We are not taxing the mass of the people, but it is quite true that this party stands for taxing the wealthy few. In other words, we stand for taking from them for carrying on the government of the country that which they have exploited from the mass of the

[5.30 p.m.] people. There is nothing to be ashamed of in that. Those men

may be entitled under the law to get the incomes they are receiving, but there must be a change in the law, and we must carry these taxation proposals in order to increase the revenue from incomes above £3,000. The incomes from property and personal exertion on which income tax was paid in 1915 amount to £10,715,045. In 1916 the amount was £12,514,363, or an increase for that year of £1,799,318. If we are ruining Queensland, how does it come about that these returns are such as they are?

Hon. J. TOLME: Nature fought against you successfully. That is the reason why.

Mr. COLLINS: I do not understand that conundrum. If, as the hon. member says,

Nature did the whole of it, then the whole of the arguments used by the Opposition fall to the ground. They have not a leg to stand on. If Nature has done it, why blame the Government as you have blamed them? It is just as well to give the grand total according to this return. In 1915 the total assessments was £16,095,766, and in 1916 £17,713,702, an increase for 1916 of £1,617,936. That does not go to show ruination. It is quite true that a larger number of persons paid income tax for 1916. I notice, too, that there is a greater number of employees who have had to pay income tax—over 1,000—and I am very pleased that they are paying it.

It has been argued by our opponents that the land tax falls upon the farmer; that the farmer is paying the land tax, we are told, from time to time. I am tired of replying to that silly argument, because it is not based on fact. They can bring forward no proof to show that the farmer is paying the land tax. I want to quote a table given in answer to questions asked by Mr. Dunstan, the hon. member for Gympie, a few weeks ago. The questions were as follows:—

"1. The total amount of land tax collected during the year ended 30th June, 1917?"

"2. Amount of land tax paid during the same year by farmers, dairymen, graziers, and fruitgrowers, with land not exceeding 1,280 acres?"

"3. Percentage of land tax paid by farmers, dairymen, graziers, and fruitgrowers mentioned in question 2?"

"4. Amount of relief granted to farmers, graziers, and agriculturists through drought and other losses?"

"5. Relief from income tax granted to farmers, graziers, and agriculturists who were assessed for land tax?"

The answers were as follows:—

"1. £362,534 11s. 5d.

"2. Land tax assessments were as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Farmers (with land not exceeding 1,280 acres)	25,291	9	3
Dairymen (with land not exceeding 1,280 acres)	3,936	2	2
Graziers (with land not exceeding 1,280 acres)	5,355	16	6
Horticulturists	55	5	2
Fruitgrowers	722	13	10
Vignerons	72	2	4
	£35,433	9	3

"3. 9.8 per cent.

"4. 716 cases, amounting to £21,370 17s. 9d.

"5. 427 cases, amounting to £786 17s. 9d."

In other words, only 9.8 per cent. of the persons mentioned in this table paid land tax. I want to get it into "Hansard" so as to get it before the farmers right throughout Queensland, so that they will know that they are not paying the land tax. The howl that is going on at the present time in regard to the land tax is coming from people who own property of an unimproved value of over £2,500. They are the ones who are crying out, especially property-owners in the cities and towns. It is just as well that the people of Queensland should be shown that the

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statements made by hon. members opposite are not founded on facts. I am sorry indeed that the land tax report is not before this Chamber. I am one of those who believe that before we discuss the Financial Statement all the reports should be placed before Parliament. (Hear, hear!) I was anxious to discuss the land tax report. I discussed it at great length last year, and I am satisfied that when we do get that report it will show that a few estates in Queensland are paying the bulk of the land tax that is being paid in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am very glad to have an opportunity to speak on the Financial Statement, because I think that that document is the most important one that is tabled in Parliament during any session. It is one that we members look forward to as containing the chief business that we have to discuss, and it is one that is looked forward to by the general public with a good deal of anxiety. I regret, like the last hon. member who spoke, that when we come to discuss the Financial Statement we have not all the reports in our hands. (Hear, hear!) We have the belated Auditor-General's report, but that only deals with part of the transactions of the Government. The most important criticisms—those dealing with State enterprises, in regard to which we are actually in the dark as members of this Parliament—are not before us, and we will not be given an opportunity this session of discussing many matters of vital importance.

Mr. PETERSON: You have got the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. VOWLES: We have not the Auditor-General's report on State enterprises. We are going to get a further report.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Can't you get it on the Estimates?

Mr. VOWLES: We may be able to get it on the Estimates, but that is not a matter for congratulation. I sincerely trust it will come forward in time for us to be able to criticise it. Quite recently I have been interested in a public enterprise in connection with Wando Vale. A remarkable thing about that appears in the Auditor-General's report. If hon. members look at page 9 and again on page 15, they will find two references. Just to show how misleading it is: We know now and the general public know that the price paid for that property, with the stock on it, was £82,000.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. VOWLES: That matter is settled now, and I am not going into the merits of the case.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: I ask, will the hon. member be in order in discussing the purchase price of Wando Vale, seeing that it is now before a court of justice?

Mr. VOWLES: It is finished.

Mr. PETERSON: We do not know that it is finished.

The CHAIRMAN: Have I the assurance of the hon. member that the case is finished?

Mr. VOWLES: That is so. I am not going into the merits of the case. I am only going to refer to one or two items.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: We have not got the report. Judgment has not been given.

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Mr. VOWLES: The report is not before us, but everything has been disclosed. You will find on page 15, "purchase of Wando Vale £72,000," which we know to be correct, and in unforeseen loan expenditure on page 9 you will find "Purchase of Wando Vale Station, £28,620." The only reason I am referring to that is this: that the evidence shows that item is £10,000. There is £18,620 unaccounted for. The information elicited the other day by a question by the hon. member for Winton shows that the only stock purchased in addition to those taken over with the station were 130 stud bulls, and yet that item shows a difference of £18,620. Probably it has something to do with the cost of management and upkeep, but, dealing with this document as a document, how can I, apart from that inquiry, intelligently discuss that matter when you have a bare figure like that and when we know the figures are £18,620 more than was actually paid in cash. I say that in passing to show how necessary it is that we should have every detail when we are discussing these matters so that we can go into them properly. If not, we cannot criticise them as we should.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you blame the Auditor-General for not giving correct figures?

Mr. VOWLES: The Auditor-General tells us he is going to give us a further report. As business men we cannot criticise the finances when they give us bare statements and no details. The only opportunity we will get of discussing the matter is when this document comes along. I am not in a position to discuss that matter now, because we have not got the information.

Mr. PAYNE: The Auditor-General says he is going to put it in a special report.

Mr. VOWLES: I know that, but when we are dealing with transactions which run into half a million of money, we ought to see how that money is being expended; whether it is being expended judiciously and wisely.

To get to the Financial Statement; we are asked this year to find the sum of £8,749,000 for the public service. When the Denham Government went out of existence the amount necessary to carry on the services of the State then was £7,199,000. On that amount of money, and on less amounts in previous years, the Denham Administration consistently showed surpluses. Since this Government has been in existence, for some reason or other—

Mr. PAYNE: War and drought.

Mr. VOWLES: War and drought have got nothing to do with it. They have had increased amounts to handle and they always come out on the wrong side. They had during the last three years £3,000,000 more than the Denham Government had in any three years, and notwithstanding that they come out this year, with the biggest revenue ever produced in Queensland, about a quarter of a million on the wrong side.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They had paid over a million in increased wages.

Mr. VOWLES: When the estimates were tabled last year, provision was made in every department for increased expenditure on account of the war. Every time when a Minister was asked to explain the larger

cost for the carrying on of his department, he said: "Additional money is being asked on account of the increased cost of materials," and so on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you not know that the railway revenue did not come up to expectations?

Mr. VOWLES: I know it did not come up to expectations, but the expenditure has gone up in leaps and bounds.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Wages and materials.

Mr. VOWLES: Extra cost of materials has very little to do with the railways; it is the wages which is doing it. If the Government want to study economy, they can study it through the Railway Department. They realise that from the fact that they have a departmental commission working at the present time, and they have a commission composed of members of this House inquiring into the cost of management of the railways. Economy is necessary, and we are asked how it can be practised; whether we would cut down wages. We do not advocate the cutting down of wages. What we advocate is that the men in the Railway Department should give value for the wages received. The Commissioner says that; I don't care who says to the contrary, I know from my own observations that that is the key of the situation. I saw an instance quite recently in my own electorate, where it was necessary for a truck to be sent from the railway station up to the butter factory to be filled with butter, and it took five men to take that truck up half a mile.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: You could not get any five men on your side to push a truck.

Mr. VOWLES: The thing is absurd; and when these men were taxed about it by the manager of the butter factory they said: "We must get out of the boss's sight sometimes." That is going on at every railway station. As far as my own town is concerned—and I am speaking from a knowledge of it—we have more men employed than we ever had at any time in the past, when we were handling far more traffic than we are now. We have men tumbling over one another, not knowing how to get out of one another's road. The Railway Department is a dumping ground for finding billets for men, and, if that sort of thing is going to go on, the deficit is going to get higher and higher.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Do you say that accounts for the loss of £1,000,000.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not say that accounts for the loss of the whole £1,000,000, but I say economy must be practised—that is, the proper economy—to see that you are getting full value for your money. "Land monopolists," as they are called, are able to make a success of their business, but the Government is not able to make a success, and that is the reason—that one is a philanthropic concern, and the other is not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is because railways have been run through vacant land, and the holders should be made to put them to proper use, or be taxed.

Mr. VOWLES: The same thing applies in other directions. As far as Crown lands are concerned, when the general public enhance the value of vacant Crown lands, the Government never turn round and divide up the spoils. The time is coming in Queensland

when we are getting, without doubt, taxation imposed merely on one class of the people. We are getting to that stage where political representation is granted to a class of the community who are suffering no taxation. I say this: that if people want to have the rights of citizens, they should bear some proportion of the cost of carrying on the country. It is not a fair thing that any Government should be a partisan Government in that respect, and that its taxation should be directed altogether against one class of persons to the exclusion of another. If that sort of thing is going to go on, it simply means this—that you are going to have one section of the community in the position of drones, and the bees will be doing all the work.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It is the drones that are getting all the revenue now.

Mr. VOWLES: With regard to income tax, the first year of this Government they levied in taxation £517,000 in income tax. In 1915 they received £760,000, and in 1916 £756,000. That means that during the last two years there has been taken out of the pockets of the people, who are creating wealth, an additional £250,000 of money more than in 1914. Is that any encouragement to enterprise? The whole of our legislation—the whole of our taxation—is going in that direction, so that it will not be worth a man's while in the future to be industrious or thrifty. We have other legislation and taxation to consider far more important in its incidence than the taxation of the State, because from the taxation we are asked to pay from the Federal point of view we are getting full value, and we are not getting it from the State taxation, and yet the State taxation is larger in proportion than the other.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: So it should be, too.

Mr. VOWLES: No. It should not be, under present conditions, because the general public are being bled by the State of the money that is being taken from them, which is money that could be diverted into a better quarter, and that is towards the cost of helping to keep the war going and maintaining our soldiers at the front.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Bunkum!

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Fitzroy thinks that bunkum, but it should be the first consideration that the money which is available from the taxpayers' pockets, the surplus money over and above their necessities, should go in that direction first, and not in the upkeep of political departments and the creating of billets for the friends of hon. gentlemen opposite.

Speaking of the railways, last year they lost £744,000, and under the new log of wages another £450,000 a year, approximately, will have to be found. That means that the railways under present conditions must fall back to the extent of £1,000,000 during the present year. If you look at the rate that is being earned by the railways you will find that the percentage on capital outlay is the lowest for many years. It is down to £2 11s., and, notwithstanding that, we are going back at the rate of £1,000,000 a year. How is that going to be overcome? I say that it will be necessary to put further burdens on the public. I see that the Government are going to issue short-dated bills to pay off the £250,000 deficit. As to whether they can do that I am going to refer later on. I doubt very much whether Treasury bonds, or debentures, can

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be issued in that case. I doubt the legality as to whether they can pay off that deficit by short-dated loan bills. It is proposed to raise money by putting on fresh taxation in two directions as far as the railways are concerned. That is affecting the primary producer. The men who produce cattle and the men who produce wool have to suffer. Hon. gentlemen opposite forget that when they are hitting at the big man—the big wool company and the big cattle king—they are hitting just the same at the smaller man who is engaged in the pastoral industry. Every man who has a hide to send down to market has to suffer. Every man who sends his ten bales of wool to market has to suffer. I ask hon. gentlemen: Do they consider that because a man earns his money by growing wool, or by selling hides or tallow, as the case may be, he is in a different position than the man who is a small storekeeper in a town or receiving his regular wages from a Government institution?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You forget the big increase in the prices of all those products.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not forget the tremendous losses they suffer at other times. You have to average up the losses and the profits in the pastoral industry, and the Government realise that themselves—and they are realising it now if I am correctly informed—because I hear on good authority that a large number of cattle they own have perished by pleuro. We have had no information on that in this House. I would like to point out that during last year—1916-7—this Government expended the sum of £621,461 on what is known as unforeseen expenditure. If you look up the records in "Hansard" you will find there was no man speaking in this Chamber who declaimed louder than the present Treasurer did that unforeseen expenditure should not be indulged in, and yet we find his Government expended £621,000 in one year. If you look at page 12 of the Auditor-General's report, clause 29, you will see the following:—

"This question of unforeseen expenditure has been frequently ventilated, and, so far back as 1884, I find the then Auditor-General (Mr. W. L. G. Drew) stated in his annual report to Parliament—

"I respectfully submit that, under such conditions as the foregoing, the control of Parliament over the public expenditure of the colony is little more than nominal, and that an early amendment of the law, in this as well as in other respects referred to in former reports, is essential. In no other colony within the British Dominions, enjoying responsible government, that I am acquainted with, would it be possible to systematically exceed the amounts deliberately appropriated by the Legislature for the public works and services."

Notwithstanding that, and notwithstanding the fact that that has been quoted by the Treasurer himself and the members of the present Government, they are carrying on the same practice, and it is getting higher and higher. It was £615,000 last year and it is £621,000 this year, and we have no control over that money. We have no knowledge of what is being done with it. It is not done with parliamentary authority, and

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there is a very great doubt as to the legality of it, as is evidenced by the fact that the Auditor-General himself says, on page 16, clause 40—

"With regard to the purchase of station and other properties, it would appear from certain expressions in the records relating to these purchases that Government debentures constitute part of the purchase money.

"I am advised, however, by the Crown Solicitor that, in a legal sense, debentures under the Government Loan Act of 1914 cannot be applied in payment of the purchase money of stations."

That is so, and I am going to read the sections of the Act. The Auditor-General goes on—

"What really happens is—'the purchase money of the stations is provided from unforeseen expenditure under warrants signed by the Governor, but not countersigned by me.' I am aware that the power of the Executive in this respect is practically unlimited.

"I am informed that it is, in effect, made a condition of the purchases that some portion of the price should be invested by the purchaser in Government debentures, which are issued under the authority of the Government Loan Act of 1914.

"I have been advised by the Hon. the Attorney-General that there is no legal objection to my countersigning debentures under these circumstances."

With all due respect and deference to the opinions of the Hon. the Attorney-General, I would like to refer hon. members to the 1915 statutes, page 6255, under the heading of "Loans." It says there very distinctly, in clause 3—

"It shall be lawful for the Governor in Council to raise by way of loan for the public service of the State such several sums of money, not exceeding in the whole the sum of eight million two hundred and forty-five thousand and sixty-eight pounds, as may be required for the several purposes following, that is to say."

Then it details the purposes; first of all is railways—giving the different railways, and how the money is to be allocated. Then the purchase of wire netting, the Sugar Works Act of 1911, loans to public bodies, and towards making good the deficits on loans issued under the Government Loan Acts of 1908, 1910, and 1911. Those are the only avenues in which that money can be expended. Yet we find that, although the Auditor-General takes exception to it—he said it was without legal authority—we have the Crown Solicitor and the Attorney-General advising him that he could issue Treasury bonds or Treasury debentures by authority of this Act for the purchase of cattle stations.

Mr. STEVENS: Not the Crown Solicitor.

Mr. VOWLES: No; the Crown Solicitor says it is illegal, but the Attorney-General says there is no legal objection. I submit that is a remarkable position when the Attorney-General disagrees with his Crown Solicitor—when the Crown Solicitor confirms the attitude adopted by the Auditor-General; when the Auditor-General refused to countersign—as he refused to countersign on other

occasions—when he says the authority is not given to him under the Act, and the Attorney-General says he can. I notice that during last year a sum of £1,257,800 was obtained by debentures issued under the authority of that Act. That is all very well, but it is just a bald statement, and it is not sufficient for the purposes of the

[7 p.m.] House that it should appear in the Financial Statement in a lump sum. Included in it, as I have pointed out, are very large sums of money which have been expended without the authority of this House, which I claim have not been expended in accordance with that Act, notwithstanding the fact that the Attorney-General says he disagrees with the Crown Solicitor, that the Auditor-General is authorised to countersign the debentures.

Dealing with State enterprises, of which we have some particulars, we find that again the State sawmills have worked at a loss. They have made a gross profit on their turnover of 13 per cent., or £8,746; but it was pointed out by the Auditor-General that when you write up against that the interest and depreciation and other charges, they have made a net loss amounting to £1,913.

Mr. MOORE: And they pay no taxes.

Mr. VOWLES: They paid no rates, and I understand they do not pay compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act. Is it not a remarkable thing that a business like that, taken over as it was with all stocks of timber, logs in the yard, logs in the forest at Taromeo, and a quantity of supplies in every direction, with an up-to-date plant and a full complement of men—taken over as a going concern from private owners who were able to carry it on at a profit—is it not strange that immediately the Government take it in hand it should show a deficit over two successive years? If that is a sample of the way in which they are going to run their private institutions, it can only end in insolvency. Notwithstanding the history of other States, the Government are going further ahead in spite of the fact that in Western Australia the business of State steamers was a huge failure; here we find the Government trying to get this House to sanction the taking over of steamers by the Government, which must necessarily, from the way they run their institutions, turn out a loss to the people.

Large sums of money are being spent from our trust funds in the improvement of land for returned soldiers. We have criticised the methods by which that money is being spent, and we have objected to this day-labour system, because we claim that the soldiers or the land, whichever you like to charge it up to, do not receive 20s. in the £1 for the work done. That was amply proved in the Beerburum district, where contract work was done at a much cheaper rate than on adjoining properties where day labour was used. We have only to look at the records of the House to find how work was done at the "Government stroke" at the site of the abattoirs on the Ipswich line, where it cost £13 17s. 6d., I think, for clearing the land and £255 a mile for erecting a fence. If that sort of thing is going to go on, it simply means that our trust funds will not be judiciously spent, and there will be a loss.

In to-day's "Courier" there is a report of a meeting of the Tiaro Shire Council, and, as it refers to the subject of Crown lands for the purpose of settling soldiers, I think it would not be out of place if I were to read it here and put it into "Hansard." It bears out what has been contended by this side of the House in respect of Beerburum land—that it is a huge mistake, in the first place, to put returned men on second-class country. It is not good business to be investing public trust moneys in securities of that class, because eventually they must be neglected and abandoned, and the money put into them will be lost. The report states that Councillor J. McRobert, in accordance with instructions, furnished the following report respecting the land reserved for soldiers' settlement in the parishes of Miva and Glenbar:—

"I am of opinion, after careful inspection, that the land in the Miva settlement is quite unsuitable for the purpose for which it is set aside, being for the most part composed of rough, mountainous country, inaccessible in many places, and quite useless for grazing purposes, unless thrown open in two large blocks, and even in that case it would only be of use to adjoining settlers, being almost devoid of surface water—in fact, most of the blocks surveyed are almost dry. The few acres of available grazing land on each block are of inferior quality, and I consider it would be an absolute impossibility for anyone, with their health and strength—let alone anyone who may be minus a limb or broken in health—to make a bare existence on a majority of the blocks, even after the expenditure of the sums of money that will be made available to soldier settlers. This settlement is served by the Kilkivan Railway line, and the distance would be anything from 7 to 12 miles, with a bad crossing over Munna Creek, which is uncrossable for considerable periods in wet weather. The foregoing remarks apply in the main to the land set apart in the parish of Glenbar, only that a bigger area of the country is not quite so inaccessible. Against that, it is further from the railway line, the approximate distance being from 12 to 18 miles. This is inferior grazing land, and I consider it my duty to say that, in my opinion, the land is quite unsuitable for the purpose of settling returned soldiers.' The report recommended that the council should decline to take any responsibility in connection with the expenditure of public money for the improvement of roads through the blocks in question, and suggested that the Lauds Department should be asked to refrain from spending any further money until the land had been sufficiently occupied to warrant such expenditure.

"Having had ocular proof of the quality of the land that is being reserved for returned soldiers, the thought is forced upon me, "Is the country in earnest in the matter?" If so, then the sooner the scheme is placed in the competent hands of men who have a practical knowledge of what is required, and how to go about it, the sooner will Queensland be saved this everlasting disgrace. This may appear a scathing criticism of what is dangled before the eyes of the public

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as a good thing; but facts are stubborn things, and are painfully patent in this case to anyone who has a knowledge of the land."

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Who signed that letter?

Mr. VOWLES: It is an article that appeared in to-day's "Courier," and it gives a report from Councillor McRobert, of the Tiaro Shire Council. That is the opinion of men who have no object in discounting the land in this locality. They simply give as the opinion of the shire that the Government should be fair, and not put men on land of this kind. It does no good to the men; it does not give them a fair chance; and it is not fair to the public funds which are going to be squandered on the land. There are hundreds and thousands of acres of other land—good land—which can be made reproductive. There is land in my own district which the Government have had on their hands for twelve months. I refer to Cecil Plains. The Government do not seem to know what they are going to do with that land. If they do know, it is time they got a move on, as they could not put soldiers on a better place. A quarter of a million of money has been tied up in Cecil Plains for twelve months, and, taking that at 4 per cent., that means an annual loss of £10,000 to the public. The owners of that land paid State land tax to the extent of £8,000, and the land should be made reproductive. At present we are losing on it at the rate of about £20,000 a year. As long as Cecil Plains is unselected, it costs a certain amount of money for somebody to look after the land and the improvements.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: One of your members said the other day that it was no good.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not say it was no good; he said it was absolutely ridiculous to cut it up into 160-acre blocks. There is any amount of good land there which can be cut up into 640 acre or 1,280 acre blocks, on which anybody could make a living, and that is where the soldiers should be settled. The general public are interested in this matter, not because they want to harass the Government, but because they want to do the best thing they can for the soldiers, and because they want to get the best investment they can for the Savings Bank money which is put into this business. Speaking about the Savings Bank money, I recollect that the Government borrowed £1,500,000 from the Savings Bank, and that money is supposed to be there at call, but it will be squandered if it is spent as money has been expended in the past by the present Government. I often wonder whether there was authority for the Treasurer to borrow from that fund, but it seems to me there is no rule now; you can do as you like.

There is another matter on which I should like more information, and that is the Imperial meat fund account. We know from the report of the Auditor-General that the total expenditure for the year was £5,100,000. It may be said that that is provided by the Imperial Government, and that we are not interested in the matter, because it is money belonging to the Imperial Government. But we are interested in the administration of the fund, which must be done by our public servants, and we want to know whether anything is being charged against the fund for

the proportion of the time of our public servants which is utilised in its administration. Further than that, we want to find out how much money has been spent in the way of legal expenses. We know that a lot of agreements had to be settled, and we want to know how the money has been disbursed, and who got the cash. We have some particulars here of the Mooraberrie cattle steal—deal, I should say. That little bit of burglary cost the State £4,349 in legal expenses alone. That case is not settled yet, and there will be a tremendous lot of legal expenses before it is settled. On page 22 of the Auditor-General's report it is stated that the fees to barristers in the Mooraberrie cattle case amounted to £1,564; that the cost of adjournment was £620; and that the travelling expenses of the Crown Solicitor and legal assistants to Melbourne and legal expenses incurred amounted to £639. We have a legal department in Brisbane, but in spite of that it cost us £639—apart from counsel's fees—to prosecute our case in Melbourne. Further down we have the information that the expenditure incurred by the Department of Justice in connection with this case was £349, and that does not include such items as typewriting fees, shorthand writers' fees, and telegrams. Printing and telegrams cost £116, the shorthand writers' fees amounted to £276, and the typewriting in Melbourne ran into £251.

Mr. PAYNE: Do you call that excessive?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know the details. We want to know who got those fees, and at what rate they were paid. Further down we have the case of Munro v. Queensland, in which the costs to the plaintiff were £545 and barristers' fees £138. In the case of the Reynolds and Flemington Meat Preserving Company v. Queensland, the barristers' fees amounted to £181. As far as I can see, the whole thing is composed of legal fees.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What about the constable?

Mr. VOWLES: Constable Balfour received an allowance of £4 6s. 8d. while absent at Mooraberrie. (Laughter.) I notice, also, that there is a sum of £37,452 to the credit of the Treasury trust fund in connection with the embargo fees paid for stock going across the border. We should have particulars of these matters; we should know how many people paid for their stock crossing the border, and we should also know how many stock crossed the border. We ought to be in a position to compare those figures with the figures given in the travelling stock returns at the border towns. It is absolutely useless to tell us that we have a credit balance of £37,452. It might just as well be £17,000 or £57,000. We should have details of the matter, and not a bare statement.

The proposal of the Government for finding the necessary ways and means is further taxation. We are asked to pass a super land tax, and to repudiate existing contracts with Crown lessees, so that their rents may be increased at a different rate from that at which it was agreed they should be increased when they took up the land. How can the Government expect the Opposition to agree to such a measure? We have always opposed the principle of repudiation, and we will do it again, I presume; I know I will. The intention of the Government is

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to get at the pastoralists and at every man on the land. The men in the far Western districts may be making good money now, but you have to balance one year with another. For some years they suffered tremendous reverses through loss of stock, and now, because they are having a prosperous time, we want to fleece them and take no notice of their losses in the past. These men, because they live in remote places, have to pay exorbitant freights on all the necessaries that go up there and the material required in carrying on their businesses. They have had to pay increased freights for bringing down their wool and general produce to market. Does the Government realise that there is taxation in the air from a Federal point of view, that the profits of these men even now are going to be taxed at a very big rate, and that their returns are nothing like what hon. members opposite believe them to be? If the Crown made a bad contract with these men, it has no more right to step in and attempt to repudiate it than any private individual would have to ask a court or Parliament to undo an agreement it had solemnly entered into in its sane senses. I, for one, cannot consent, while I am sitting in opposition, to agree to legislation, the effect of which will be the repudiation of existing agreements. The Treasurer tells us that they have observed the strictest economy and that money has been judiciously expended, but I would like to see evidence of that. We cannot see evidence of sufficient return for the money expended. Is the Government going on with its public enterprises, in face of the fact that butchers' shops are yet a failure?

Mr. CARTER: That is not true. State insurance has shown £50,000 profit.

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about business.

Mr. CARTER: The State stations are a success.

Mr. VOWLES: We know nothing about the State stations. I know that the Government may have suffered a big loss of stock through pleuro. A large number of valuable stock have died quite recently, and they have said nothing about it. (Government interjections.) It is quite correct. I know all about it, and it is being suppressed like everything else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You cannot prove that, any more than you can prove the other statements you made.

Mr. VOWLES: With regard to these public undertakings, they have taken the sawmills over as a going concern. For the butchers' shops they have shown a profit, but how have they made that profit?

Mr. CARTER: You said a little while ago that they were a failure.

Mr. VOWLES: Of course they are. If you take a man's goods for 2d. or 2½d.—or whatever the price may be—and retail them, like the Government did, at a profit of £26,000 on the surplus meat they took from the growers, they cannot possibly lose when they are carrying on business on those lines. The same thing applied last year. The profits on the State butchers' shops were made up by retailing meat in the open market in the South.

The PREMIER: No; that is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the way they are going on. They "burgle" the goods from

the public and sell them in the market down there and put the profit in their pockets and say that the business is carried on successfully.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is something like your statement about the munitions.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not see anything about those munitions in the Auditor-General's report. I do not see that promised statement showing that all those losses which were marked off on the last returns were going to be created into profits. It is only a few weeks ago that the hon. gentleman was interjecting that I was wrong, and that all those goods were going to be paid for by someone.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Yes, paid by the Commonwealth.

Mr. VOWLES: Where are the returns?

The PREMIER: You do not want any returns, do you?

Mr. VOWLES: We want the figures. The hon. gentleman's policy is to suppress things and make statements here, because he knows we are not in a position to contradict him. If you look at the returns for last year you will find that at Rockhampton it cost £12,000 for labour and material for munitions to create £52 as a result.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Is not that statement absurd? Your own sense ought to tell you that.

Mr. VOWLES: That is in the Auditor-General's report. Where is the return to show that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What is that?

Mr. VOWLES: You gave us to understand that faulty steel was sent up, and that that was the cause of such a great loss, and that the money was going to be returned to the Government. Has it been returned? We have no knowledge of it. Perhaps hon. gentlemen opposite have; I see they are putting their heads together. That is why I say these returns and their statements are no good. If we have an Auditor-General's report, we must get details, so that the man who understands figures can go into the matter properly. The Auditor-General is going to give us a return later on with regard to these public enterprises. He wants a special commissioner to assist him to do it, because it is becoming such a huge affair. Until such time as we get that, the Financial Statement which is laid before us is nothing more than so much paper and print, and there is no business in it.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I would like to say a few words on the Financial Statement before it goes through. I must congratulate the Treasurer on being able to put forward such a satisfactory balance-sheet of the State's affairs for the past twelve months. (Hear, hear!) Despite the criticism of the Opposition—and it has been of a very futile kind—there is still something to be said for a Government which is able to keep the wheels of industry going in such a manner. No matter where one turns, people are able to enjoy themselves, spend money, and live properly in a manner that is unprecedented in the history of Queensland. There is far less indication of poverty among the great mass of the people than there has ever been in the history of any Government of Queensland.

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When we realise these things—that a war has been waging for three years, and that 50,000 of our best wealth-producers have been taken away to the front, and many of them killed, and that this State has been put to a considerable expense in providing in some measure for the dependents by means of railway passes; that the State has assisted to the extent of possibly £100,000 in helping the Commonwealth to carry on the war—when all these facts are taken into consideration, it must be patent to everybody that a Government which can maintain more than a semblance of prosperity in the face of these things, which can show actual prosperity and a substantial balance-sheet, with the probability of a surplus at the end of the next financial year, something must be said for the Government. (Hear, hear!) I do not want particularly to deal with the State's finances. To me they are satisfactory. I believe that no body of men in charge of the affairs of a State could have done better during the past two years than the Labour Government have done. If more expenditure has been indulged in by the Treasurer, there is no doubt that there has been much justification for it. The price of everything that can be considered as being necessary for building material has increased beyond all previous probability. Those of us who know exactly what the increase in the cost of building material is must be aware that for the various departments to come out as well as they have done is at least very good financing. The questions which have been agitating the minds of the people of Queensland during the past few months are whether or not the Labour Government are going to be allowed [7.30 p.m.] to govern this State, or whether a few nominees in the Legislative Council are going to govern it. That, taken in connection with the recent shipping trouble, and with the strikes throughout Australia at the present time, makes one come to the conclusion that the Government of Queensland to-day, with the restrictions placed on it by the Legislative Council, is becoming something of a farce. We appealed to the people, as is known, on 5th May last for the purpose of securing a vote to enable us to abolish the Legislative Council. Through, to some extent, misrepresentation, and possibly because of the failure of the people to grasp the significance of the problem we put to them, they decided that they were not going to abolish the Upper House. Yet a Government which has been placed in power for the express purpose of carrying out certain measures, elected as this Government has been by an overwhelming majority, must be allowed to carry out their legislative programme, and whatsoever stands in the way should be removed. That seems to be a sound principle of constitutional government—of government by the people for the people—and I say that the hindrance in the way of the Queensland Government to-day is the Legislative Council. The people have said that the Legislative Council is not to be removed as yet, and consequently the only means whereby this Government can secure the passage of their legislation is by flooding that Upper House. I was very pleased to see that nine new members were sworn into that Chamber yesterday. These men will, I believe, give a very good account of themselves, and will assist this Government greatly in putting through their legislation. But I noticed in a division this afternoon that there were only eleven members supporting a proposal which was supported unanimously

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by every Government member in this House, and which was passed by this House and sent to the Legislative Council for its approval. The number of Councillors who voted against the passage of that Bill was thirteen, but there were nineteen all told in the Legislative Council who would have voted against that Bill had it been necessary for their votes to be cast. In the face of opposition such as this, and when we are told that the Governor is going to allow the Government of this State to appoint another four members to that Legislative Council—I have no official knowledge of it, but the "Courier" said so this morning, and the "Courier," according to hon. members opposite, must be true.

Mr. CORSER: You know it is true.

Mr. POLLOCK: I know nothing about it, but the "Courier" said four members are still to be appointed. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that four more members are to be appointed to the Upper House. That will give the Government thirteen new appointees which, together with the two or three others who now support Government measures, will make about sixteen supporters.

Mr. MACARNEY: That is five more than you are entitled to.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is a moot point, as I shall presently prove to the hon. member. I would like to point out that these sixteen, and there will probably be sixteen of our supporters in the Council if the statement in the "Courier" is true—

Mr. CORSER: It is in the "Standard."

Mr. POLLOCK: We can assume that, if the "Standard" has published it, it is quite true. That will leave the Government still with a minority of anything from three to twelve members in the Legislative Council, and we know that were it possible for the Government to secure sufficient nominees to make the voting close in the Upper House, that some of the old chaps would be carried there on stretchers to record their votes if it was found necessary. That means that the Government must have a majority of supporters in the Legislative Council to enable them to carry out their legislative programme. We should be allowed to put into the Legislative Council sufficient nominees to enable us to carry out our legislation. New South Wales has done something which is almost unprecedented in the history of self-governing dominions, or so-called self-governing dominions. Its Constitution, like the Queensland Constitution, has no prescribed limit as to the number of members that may be appointed to the Upper House. There is no limit as to the smallness of the number, nor is there any limit in regard to the largeness of the number of members that may be appointed to the Legislative Council in either of the two States. The number of members in the Legislative Council of New South Wales in 1906 was 55; in 1908, 52; 1909, 57; 1910, 54; 1911, 49; 1912, 58; and in 1915 there were 54. The greatest number of members in the New South Wales Legislative Council during the past fifteen or twenty years, which is as far back as I have gone, was 58. During the past session of the New South Wales Parliament, the Acting Governor of New South Wales took it on his own shoulders, apparently, to appoint twenty-one new members to the Upper House of that State, which gives them now a total of 71 members, which is really

thirteen more members than ever the Upper House of New South Wales had before. That goes to prove that in making appointments to the Upper House there can be no prescribed limit. The number of members is fixed by custom, and under abnormal circumstances, such as we are faced with in Queensland to-day, the Government of this State should be allowed to appoint as many members as is necessary to enable them to carry out the mandate of the people. Although Mr. Justice Cullen permitted the New South Wales Government, in the absence of its Premier, to appoint those men to the Upper House, they were not faced with anything like the trying circumstances that this Government is faced with. They had no difficulty in putting their legislation through the Lower House, nor had they any difficulty in getting it through the Upper House. Hence, if they were allowed to appoint thirteen more members than were ever previously in the Legislative Council of New South Wales, how much greater necessity is there for the Queensland Government to be permitted to exercise its right—I call it a right—and appoint a sufficient number to give them a majority in the Upper House of this State? Let us take the position as it applies at the present time. If the Government of Queensland are unsuccessful in putting through this Shipping Bill—I believe it is a Bill that is desired by the great mass of the people of Queensland—then what position is this Government placed in? Is it in the position that it desires to appoint more than the thirteen members and is not allowed to do so either by His Excellency the Governor, or by the Imperial Government; or is it in the position that it has not yet asked for more than thirteen members? While I have no inside knowledge of the matter, we must assume that the Premier of Queensland, being desirous of putting through his legislation, has gone so far as to urge His Excellency to allow him to appoint more than thirteen new members—in fact, to secure as many as would be desired to make a majority in that Chamber. If that is so, and only thirteen members are to be appointed to that Chamber, it is not unfair to assume that His Excellency, or the Imperial Government—either of them—placed a limit on the number of members who could be appointed to the Legislative Council. If that is the case, I think that the Government has fairly just cause for complaint. In fact, I think that—while I have no intention of attempting to teach His Excellency his duty—Keith, who is a noted authority on responsible Government in the Dominions, lays it down that the Governor is bound to accept the advice of his responsible Ministers. For instance, he says—

“But what is more important still is the fact that all these provisions may be read as only applying in the cases where they subsequently affect the classes of subjects mentioned in their Imperial aspect as affecting people and places outside the colony in question. You can legislate as you think fit for yourselves, the Imperial Government in effect says, but you must not without some check such as reservation, legislate for us.”

That means that the functions of Government are so defined by this noted authority that he tells us clearly that while we legislate for ourselves the Imperial Government does not say anything to us nor do they put any

obstacle in the way of our doing so, but immediately we start legislating for them it is a horse of another colour. One can quite understand that. In this matter of the shipping question, and in the matter of making those appointments to the Legislative Council, we are not attempting to legislate for the Imperial Government, nor for any other part of the British dominions beyond the State in which this Government has jurisdiction. He goes on to say—

“It will be seen that in some cases in executive Acts of the ordinary kind, more in regard to the prerogative of mercy, and in quite a number as regards the reservation of Bills, the Governor has no option but to obey his instructions, unless he desires to be faithless in his duty to the Imperial Government.”

Those are very strong words. He goes on—

“The peculiar nature of his position in these cases is reflected in the fact that the Governor is entitled under the colonial regulations to receive, and, what is more important, does receive in each case ere he assents to an Act, an assurance from his law officer, given as such, that the Bill is one which he can properly assent to on legal grounds.”

I maintain again here that the appointing of more than thirteen members is something to which His Excellency can agree on legal grounds, because, as there is no limit in the Constitution in the number of appointees, that is very obvious. He goes on to say—

“And, where there are any instructions specifying the classes of Bills to be reserved, he adds that there are no provisions in the instructions which require reservation. The advice is not given by the Premier as Premier, even if he happens, as has been the case, to hold the position of Attorney-General as well. It is given as that of the legal adviser of the Governor, as the Crown law officer, as the Commonwealth phrase is, and in no other capacity, and in those cases where the Minister of Justice is also Attorney-General he expressly gives the opinion as Attorney-General.”

If we can safely assume on reasonable grounds that the Premier has asked for more than thirteen appointments, he has asked, not as Attorney-General on his legal grounds, not as Premier on personal grounds, but as the head of this Government, who require to pass legislation for the people of this State. He is in no way concerned in the views of the Imperial Government, because he does not propose to touch the Imperial Government by the appointment of more than thirteen members, so that we can assume that there again the Premier is within his rights as Premier and as head of the Government of this State. Keith goes on to say—

“It will be convenient to consider later on the cases in which Imperial interference has been employed in the past, and will be used in the future, but the question here arises of the position of the Ministry and the Governor, when a Governor, in obedience to his instructions, or what he conceives to be his instructions, refuses to accept ministerial advice. In one point the matter is being simplified; it is no longer necessary, as it was even until comparatively late in

the last century, for a Governor to act on what he deems to be Imperial grounds without knowing whether or not the matter which his Ministers intend to do is really one considered by the Imperial Government a case for serious action."

That does not enter into the question. Keith goes on—

"In the early days of responsible Government, when despatches took two months to reach Australia, and there was no telegraph, the Governor held an awkward position; he might either neglect Imperial interests, in which case he would probably be recalled"—

There is no case of Imperial interests here—

"or he might fight with Ministers and make the place very uncomfortable for himself by the process of setting up an Imperial interest in which the Imperial Government did not happen to be interested."

If those grounds—the grounds advanced by one of the most noted authorities in the world on constitutional Government and British constitutional Government—are sound, then it seems to me that no serious objection can be raised by His Excellency to the appointment of more than thirteen members to the Legislative Council. And I say that when the Governor—if the Governor does—chooses to make an Imperial affair out of an affair which has no relation to Imperial interests whatsoever, then the time must come when the people have to appeal to the highest tribunal—to appeal, I say, to the Governor's bosses, as it were—to the Imperial Government. I say that in this case if—and I am only supposing—if more than thirteen members have been refused, then I say it is the bounden duty of this Government to go over the head of the Governor and to go to the Governor's bosses—the Imperial Government—and to ask that Government to allow this State to exercise its proper constitutional authority.

There are some other matters on which I wish to touch before I resume my seat, and that is the accusations made by many of the Opposition that members on this side of the House were disloyal. I hardly think it is necessary for members on this side of the Chamber to repudiate assertions such as that. (Hear, hear!) But there has been more than that said, and that is that the men who are out on strike at the present time throughout Australia, not alone in Queensland, but in New South Wales also, were receiving German gold, and the hon. member for Toowong was the gentleman who made that statement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not think he did. Be accurate.

Mr. POLLOCK: Those words were the words, as near as I can remember, that the hon. gentleman used.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Quite near enough for you.

Mr. POLLOCK: I think they are near enough to be quite correct.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Use the words themselves if you want to be really on the track.

Mr. POLLOCK: I will use the words. I now remember them fairly well. The hon. member said, "There is more than a suspicion that the men who are out on strike,

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or some of the men out on strike, were in receipt of enemy gold." And he said that members on this side were also in the swim.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No. I said that the strike was fomented by German gold.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman now says the strike was fomented by German gold. That is exactly the same thing. And after accusing us of being in the swim, he said he did not do anything of the sort. But we can let that pass. But we cannot allow to pass the accusation that German gold was responsible for the strike. Although many attempts have been made by the Opposition to assert that every returned soldier—and every soldier who has not gone, but is still in camp—stood aloof from the strike, we find that 500 returned soldiers marched at the head of the procession of men who were out on strike in Sydney. Does the hon. gentleman mean to assert that those 500 returned men are in receipt of German gold?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I asserted nothing of the sort.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman did not assert it, because he is not game to assert it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I will assert what I like without asking you.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman asserted it by innuendo, which was none the less deplorable and none the less mean.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That will not worry me.

Mr. POLLOCK: The policy of the Win-the-war Government is the policy of the Opposition, and they will probably have the cheek to come out as a Win-the-war party before the next elections.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They will never accuse you of it, anyhow.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member for Bowen has handed me a copy of "Hansard" containing the statement made by the hon. member for Toowong, and it coincides with what I said. It is fairly clear.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Read it. Let us have it.

Mr. POLLOCK: On page 1449 of "Hansard" the hon. gentleman made use of these words—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in quoting from a previous debate of this session.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am very sorry, Mr. Bertram. The hon. member for Toowong is very fortunate, because I intended to quote his exact remarks. He has squeezed out of it again, fortunately for himself. All references to the fact that the soldiers have taken any part in the strike in Sydney have been censored by the Prime Minister under the War Precautions Act.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I did not know that he did that.

Mr. POLLOCK: I thought the hon. gentleman did not take much interest in Parliamentary affairs. If he did not know that he evidently knows very little.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I did not even know that they led the strike.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the hon. gentleman will come along with me to-morrow, I can show him a photograph of the returned soldiers leading the strikers, and you can see their badges.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Was it censored?

Mr. POLLOCK: It was not censored from me. The whole position to me is perfectly clear. Mr. Hughes, of course, is desirous of assisting the Opposition to defeat the Labour party at the next elections. They want to get seven Liberal Governments in Australia, and the only way they have of doing that is to censor from the Press any intimation to the effect that returned soldiers are in any way taking any part in the strike. They will then be able to say that, as the returned soldiers are taking no part in the strike, the men who are taking part in it are disloyal. They dare not accuse the returned soldiers of being disloyal. Another remarkable thing that has happened is that the newspapers are not allowed to give any information of the fact that a whole battalion of soldiers embarking for the front refused to go on the transport because it was manned by scab labour. That is a fact too, and yet reference to it has been censored from every newspaper in Australia. Further than that, we have information—and it is fairly reliable information—that there have been serious disturbances in New Zealand over the conscription question. Not a word is allowed to be spoken about that. Not a word spoken in this House on that question can go outside. Yet some people here are trying to introduce conscription by means of a petition which is being taken round the city. They know quite well that if any reference to the New Zealand trouble is allowed to leak out then there is no chance of bringing about conscription in Australia.

Mr. MOORE: There is no trouble in New Zealand, and you know it very well.

Mr. POLLOCK: The other day I asked a question in this House with reference to the sending of Australian soldiers to New Zealand to quell the riots there, but the Premier did not receive any reply from the Prime Minister when he asked him a question on that point.

Mr. MOORE: It was too absurd.

Mr. POLLOCK: No satisfaction has ever been given regarding that question. I know a woman in Brisbane who received a letter from her son on active service in New Zealand. What was he doing on active service in New Zealand? That is what I want to know. No satisfactory explanation has been afforded by the Prime Minister. In view of the fact that we have heard these repeated stories about riots in New Zealand over conscription and that scores of men have been imprisoned for preaching "No conscription" over there, and in view of the fact that the Prime Minister and his satellites are maintaining a silence on the question, I think there is a good deal of ground for our suspicions. Yet, no answer is forthcoming. Not one question regarding the censorship is allowed to leak outside this House. That is one method of bludgeoning the people so that they will get absolutely no information about this war. The Opposition have told us that nothing matters but the winning of the war. If these things are true, then they should be brought to light, so that we can remedy them in order to successfully prosecute the war. Reference was made by the hon. member for Murilla to the fact that the men out on strike were not out on strike for the purpose of getting greater wages, but they were out for revolution. If I know anything of revolution, it means the

overthrowing of constituted authority in order to establish another Government in its place. That is the real meaning of revolution. I want to know whether any evidence can be brought forward to show that these men are out for anything of the kind. There has not been one tittle of evidence which can convict any man out on strike of having any such purpose in his mind. I have read the strike evidence fairly closely, and I can say that, so far as the strikers are concerned, no stick or stone or any missile has been found on the person of any striker. Almost every man who came out on strike in New South Wales was penniless a week or a fortnight after the strike started. Yet we are told that these men who were almost without food when they went out on strike did so for the purpose of starting a revolution against the Government. Why, the men who were on strike in Queensland passed motions of confidence in favour of the Government! Yet they are accused of being out in favour of a revolution! Nobody has attempted to invade the Houses of Parliament, and nobody has interfered with the State Governor or the Governor-General. I would like to know where this talk about revolution is coming from.

Mr. CARTER: They are only misleading statements.

Mr. POLLOCK: I now wish to refer to other matters, not of so much importance as these are, but of considerable importance so far as the welfare of this State is concerned. There is, in my opinion, a need for an amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act in certain respects. I believe that an amending Bill is being introduced in another place, and it is possible that a majority of the

Legislative Council will be able [8 p.m.] to pass the amendments they desire and submit it to this Chamber for the approval of the Government. If that occurs, I think it advisable that a provision should be grafted on the Industrial Arbitration Act altering the provisions of the Act so far as it applies to miners working in hot places. When we passed the Arbitration Act through this House, you will remember that it provided that miners who worked in a temperature of 85 degrees Fahrenheit by wet bulb were not to work more than six-hour shifts. That applies to men who work in hot ends, winzes, and rises, certain places in mines where men are subject to greater disabilities from heat than they are in other portions of mines. Those provisions were good so far as they went, but since that Bill was passed an award has been given by the judge of the Arbitration Court in North Queensland containing a provision that the temperatures in which shifts of over six hours are to be worked are temperatures of more than 82 degrees by wet bulb. It is manifestly unfair, when men are working there under an award which provides that they should work six-hour shifts in temperatures of over 82 degrees, that we have an Act of Parliament containing the provision I have mentioned, an Act which we consider, and which in other respects is, entirely up-to-date and which is the best of its kind, I think, in the world. I hope that the Government will see their way clear to introduce a provision into the Bill to enable them to amend that temperature clause so that men will work six-hour shifts in all temperatures over 82 degrees.

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Now, there are other matters, such as the administration of the Workers' Accommodation Act, to which I would like to refer. I think I may here remark that the Queensland Government sustained a very severe loss when the late Director of Labour left his department. I think it can be fairly said that Mr. Crampton has reorganised that department in a way that few men thought possible, and much has been done under his guidance, but particularly has he organised the subdepartment known as the Workers' Accommodation Department. To-day, in Queensland, there is no more active or vigilant body of men than the hut inspectors. These men have all been supplied with motor-cars, and have been able to effect very considerable alterations in the huts in which the shearers and others are compelled to sleep in the West. That is a very good thing so far as it has gone, but I think that an explanation should be made for the benefit of those who are inclined to think the Government slow, that the absence of building material has prevented many pastoralists from being able to build their huts. There is no doubt that it is almost impossible to obtain galvanised iron at the present time, and although the inspectors of huts and the Director of Labour have endeavoured to secure other roofing material, it has not been possible to obtain the right stuff for the West. I hope that difficulty will soon be overcome, and when it is overcome, I think we shall be able to say that the accommodation of the workers throughout Queensland is just what it should be and just what it should have been years ago.

One other matter to which I might be permitted to refer is the action of the Government in granting allowances to school teachers. It has been said by many—and I think there is a great deal of truth in it—that most past Governments were decidedly in favour of, or at least had a great leaning towards, giving educational facilities in the cities and neglecting the country to a great extent. So far as this Government are concerned, I have not had any cause for complaint so far as the district I represent is concerned, but I must say that there seems even yet to be a tendency—not on the part of the Government, but on the part of the people in the cities—to expect more in the way of educational facilities than are provided for their fellows in the country. I know that people in the city of Brisbane, for instance, who are compelled to send their children more than a quarter or half a mile to school become suddenly imbued with the idea that the Government should erect a school at their very door. Yet, in the country we have many places—

Mr. MAY: Where they have to go 10 miles.

Mr. POLLOCK: As the hon. member for Flinders rightly interjects, where the children have to go 10 miles or more to school. That is not such a great disability, but when one remembers the difficulties in combating the fly pest in the West—we must recognise that the Government have done a good deal—I think that, without undue criticism, I might say that the Government could yet do more, and could well do more, to provide facilities for the fencing in of schools with gauze. It is a pitiable sight in some of the outback districts to see children going to school with eyes like pieces of raw steak, and that has applied in more than a score of places in the west of

Queensland. I think that a Government which is worthy of the name of Government, and can afford, consistently with the financial position, to give to these children the chance of becoming educated, and preserve their eyesight, are doing much for the future of this State. I say that our present Minister for Education has been remarkably good in this respect, and I can remember no instance in which a request of mine has been refused.

But there are other disabilities, too, and those are the disabilities that parents labour under who are living a long way from where there are schools, in places where there are not sufficient children to warrant the establishing of schools. There are many places in the Gregory electorate, an electorate of 97,000 square miles in area, which are not easily accessible to a school teacher, as one can easily understand, and while the department and late Government—be it said to their credit—have provided facilities for itinerant teachers to go round to these places, yet I think much more can be done in that respect. I say that with the full knowledge of the efforts that the department have made. For the purpose of travelling around these different country districts and teaching a couple of children here, another one there, and three or four somewhere else, a single man is easily the best man for the department to employ. That goes without saying. But to get a single man who is eligible to take on that work is not easy, because no greater flag-flapping race of persons exists than the Western squatter, and when an eligible single man comes along to teach the children they promptly ask him why he is not at the front? In fact, that occurred to a gentleman who was an itinerant teacher in the West at a place not far from Winton. This gentleman had been so consistently picked at by the squattocracy at that part of the country that he went to the front. He wanted to go all along, but he felt he was doing better work out there, because men could not be obtained to take his place. He knew the difficulty the department was labouring under, but still the pin-pricking of the squattocracy, as I have said, went on, and in disgust he was compelled to leave that job and enlist, and since then the department has not been able to get another man to take his place. There are at least fifteen or twenty children in the district who cannot be shifted away to where there are schools, and they have just as great a right to education as the children in the city, and I say that, to my knowledge, the department has made efforts to get other men to fill their places. I think that if the department cannot get men voluntarily to go there, they should transfer each of their teachers for a certain period, allow them, or compel them if necessary, to take on the work in that part for a certain period. If they took it on for three months, turn about, no great hardship could be inflicted. I hope the department will act on that suggestion, and that if they can possibly secure men they will send itinerant teachers to every place where they can be utilised. There is only one other matter to which I should like to refer, and that is the extension of the Winton to Springvale Railway. A good deal of misapprehension has been caused in the constituency which I represent by the neglect, as they term it, of the Government to proceed with that extension. It has been repeatedly stated from the front Ministerial bench that the Government are in a very bad way as regards the supply of material for railways. They

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are not able to secure the necessary money to push on with all the railways that they desire to construct, and consequently some lines have been temporarily dropped.

Mr. GUNN: Won't those railways benefit the squattocracy?

Mr. POLLOCK: I do not mind the squattocracy being benefited. In fact, I would rather like it if the railway is going to make for the general prosperity of the country. But I think I might be permitted to remark here and there that the squattocracy are not a saintly body of men. Everything they do is not right. They can do wrong just the same as any other body of men.

Mr. GUNN: Why not conscript them?

Mr. POLLOCK: I think some of them might well be conscripted. Some of them are in favour of it. And if their own law is applied to themselves, it will probably not be any harm. I have no objection to their being conscripted; they have plenty of money to leave to their dependents if they are knocked out in the field, and if the hon. member wants to have them conscripted, I suggest that he approach the Federal Government to that end.

Mr. GUNN: I mean their wealth, too—their sheep and cattle. Give them to their shearers and rouseabouts.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member does not believe in the conscription of sheep and cattle, although he believes in the conscription of men. The hon. member does not believe in the conscription of ships even, but spoke against it and voted against it the other day.

Mr. GUNN: I did not open my lips.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the hon. member did not open his lips that is a very unusual thing, because we have often to listen to him for an hour or so telling stories about opossums, native bears, and other things which have nothing to do with the debate.

Mr. STEPHENS: I do not think he ever spoke for an hour since you have been here.

Mr. POLLOCK: If he did speak for an hour no one would object. This Winton to Springvale line is constructed for 26 miles from Winton, and if it were carried another 14 miles it would become revenue-producing. It is a first-class line. It was started by the late Denham Government, but not one wheel has run on it since it was completed for 26 miles.

Mr. GUNN: What have your Government been doing, then?

Mr. POLLOCK: I explained a while ago that the Government have not the material to enable them to carry on the railway. But I have received the assurance of the Minister for Railways that the line has been only temporarily abandoned until Queensland is in a sufficiently prosperous state to enable the Government to get the material and the finances wherewith to continue the construction of the railway.

I should like to remark, in conclusion, that the Government's policy for the present financial year is a policy at which no one can cavil. I have gone carefully through the Estimates, and as far as I can see, there are no items which can be reduced. In fact, despite all the criticism which came from hon. members opposite on the Financial Statement, not one word came from them

which would show in what direction the Government can economise. There was plenty of criticism, plenty of wild assertions about the morning after, the night before, the big financial drunk, debt, depression, and despair, and all that sort of thing, but it does not cut any ice when nothing is put forward in the way of a constructive policy to show the Government where they can save. If any hon. member can now, by way of interjection, show the Government where they can economise, I shall be thankful.

Mr. GUNN: You can sack the Public Works Commission.

Mr. POLLOCK: That would be a "penny wise and pound foolish" policy, because the Public Works Commission have saved the State over and over again all the expenses that have been incurred in connection with their work.

Mr. GRAYSON: Not one penny.

Mr. POLLOCK: Yes; they have saved what they have cost over and over again. Members opposite did say at one time that they would knock out the State butchers' shops. But that would not be economising, because the State butchers' shops are revenue-producing. The Opposition would probably knock out the allowance to natural and foster-mothers. They will not say that now, but we know that they will knock it out if by any streak of misfortune they are returned to power at the next election.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Tell us something we do not know.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is very easy to tell the hon. member something he does not know. I could tell him a lot of things he does not know. In fact, I told him a lot of things to-night that he admitted he did not know, and probably, if I talked all night, I would still be telling him things he does not know. I should like to say, before I resume my seat, that the financial position of the State is satisfactory. No other word can sum it up properly, and when the financial position is satisfactory, the State has nothing to growl about.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I do not propose to follow the hon. member very much in the speech he has just made, but I should like to say that if the Federal authorities, in their wisdom, decide that it is necessary for the purpose of protecting the Empire in a time of war that certain matters should be censored, it ill becomes anyone in this House, or any member of the State Government, to break through the wall of protection which the Commonwealth Government have endeavoured to erect for such a worthy purpose. I have heard before the statements about New Zealand. I am in communication with people in New Zealand, and I have never yet heard one word which would justify the rumours that I know have been about the city—the rumours to which the hon. member who has just spoken has given publicity to-night. From information that I have received, I honestly believe that there is no ground whatever for such statements. As I have said before, I think it ill becomes the hon. member to endeavour to break through the wall of protection which the Commonwealth Government has endeavoured to create. The hon. gentleman recently put questions in connection with certain matters arising under the war precautions regulations, and if the questions which the hon. member had asked

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were put up in the same way as a Minister admitted the other day, then I do not think much of a Government which carries out such a practice. I am not going to follow that matter further. But the hon. member appears to have been put up to-night to make some comments in connection with the position of His Excellency the Governor in making appointments to the Upper House.

Mr. POLLOCK: He was not put up at all by anybody. I do not need to be put up by anybody outside this House like you do.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member has read from "Keith," whom he quoted as a great authority on the subject. He seems to have forgotten, at any rate, in referring to New South Wales, the relative proportion of the members in the Upper House in that State to the number in the more popular House. After all is said and done, the principle hitherto recognised in Queensland has been that the number of members of the Upper House has never exceeded two-thirds of the number of this popular Chamber.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Tory Governments recognised that.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We know that no principle, however well founded, is good enough to stick to in the minds of the present Government of Queensland. We expect new actions; but when these things are established one would, at any rate, expect the principle that has prevailed in the past would at least be acknowledged and considered. The hon. member says he knows on the authority of the "Standard" or some other paper, that four more members are to be appointed. The number of members appointed to the Upper House will therefore be five more than has been generally acknowledged, even by members on the other side of the House, as the maximum that His Excellency could be expected to grant. So that, instead of apparently making a case against His Excellency for not giving them enough, he has shown that His Excellency has given them more than they themselves expected. That seems to be the position. It seems passing strange to me that, when men are appointed to the Upper House, some of the names that are mentioned are not even known to be names of Queenslanders. It also strikes me as passing strange—I do not yet know whether all the names that are mentioned are going to eventuate or not; but I have heard names mentioned of men who are not actually Queenslanders.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Is there anyone appointed who is not a Queenslanders?

Mr. MACARTNEY: As a matter of fact, we know that there is one of the members of the other House representing members on the opposite side of this House who—if reports are true—has gone to another State to reside permanently.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: But there are members there who never attend.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That may be. Let me deal with one thing at a time. It strikes me as passing strange that thirteen members should be nominated to the other Chamber when hon. members opposite have practically admitted that the greatest number they could possibly expect to get would be eight.

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Hon. J. A. FIELLY: We want to have none at all.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yet the hon. member for Gregory is put up to-night, apparently to make a case for the appointment of a number that would swamp the Upper Chamber altogether.

Mr. POLLOCK: Not at all. You speak for yourself and your partner. I have had no £2,000 subsidy like you.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am sorry the hon. member introduced the matter, and I certainly am not going to continue it. It seems strange that we should be discussing the Financial Statement to-night in the absence of the Treasurer. It was introduced a fortnight ago by the Treasurer, and it has been discussed in this Chamber while the hon. gentleman has found time to proceed on his way to Melbourne.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: On very important business.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It may be important business, but it just shows how the House is treated in matters of this sort. The man who is responsible, who answers the criticisms, and who ought to take up the points which are made, leaves the State.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: He recognises that there is no real criticism so far.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not propose to follow the hon. gentleman in his interjections. I would ask him kindly not to interject, as I do not propose to take up my time replying to interjections. I do not mind a relevant interjection, but, as a rule, the hon. gentleman's interjections are not relevant. One matter for regret in connection with the Financial Statement is the omission in it of any reference to our enterprises. I know that the omission has been quoted by a section of the Press with approval. Personally, I think it is of the greatest advantage, because it shows, more than anything else does, in a simple, concrete form, what the history of the past year has been—whether it has been up to the expectations of the Statement which preceded the year—and it also shows what the hopes in the same direction are in the future. It shows us whether we have progress and prosperity, how the three great primary industries of Queensland are progressing, and how the land settlement of the country is going ahead, and yet we have not one reference to it in the Statement, and no expression in regard to the year that we are now upon. I can only come to one conclusion—that the information is omitted because the information for the time being does not suit the Government. They are not able to show that record of progress which a State like Queensland should be able to show. They can only show retrogression, and hence the omission of a statement which does not bolster up a case for the Government. I am not going into the financial figures, as they have been very eloquently dealt with by the hon. member for Murrumba. The speech of that hon. member would be well worth reading as a summary, showing the whole position, and the difference between the handling of the finances by the present and past Governments. I think it is a pity that the Auditor-General's report was

not before the Chamber before the hon. member for Murrumba addressed us on the subject. I think that, as a rule, it is a fair thing that the Auditor-General's statement should be in possession of all members before the Financial Statement is discussed at all.

Mr. FOLEY: Did your Government ever have it? I never remember it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes; frequently. I am not prepared to say that our Government always had it, but I say it would be a great convenience if we always had it. Even if a wrong has been committed in the past, that does not justify the omission at the present time. Things are generally unsatisfactory, and it is about the only document we get in connection with the finances. We are getting into a very unsatisfactory condition in regard to our finances. It seems to me that the Government have taken the whole business very much out of the hands of Parliament, and that is not as it ought to be. It is not a matter of who is on this side or who is on the other side of the House for the time being. The question is: Is Parliament going to have the control of taxation and the control of expenditure? It is not only a trouble in our own Parliament, but in other Parliaments of the world: but, in view of the fact that certain points have been raised by the Auditor-General, it is only right that we should give some attention to that particular subject. At the present time, a Select Committee has been appointed in England on a reference from the Government—

“to examine the expenditure which is now being defrayed out of moneys provided by Parliament and to report what, if any, economies, consistent with the execution of the policy decided by the Government, may be effected therein; to make recommendations, in regard to the form of public accounts, the system of control within the departments, and by the Treasury, and the procedure of this House in relation to Supply and Appropriation, so as to secure more effective control by Parliament over public expenditure.”

If such a commission were appointed here it would be more apropos of the present position, and it would repay Parliament, and repay the State. Prior to the [3.30 p.m.] appointment of that committee the matter was discussed in the House of Commons, and an ex-Minister, speaking on the 6th July, used these words, which, I think, also are apropos here at the present time. He said—

“From the most ancient times, this House insisted on its right to control all the taxes and all the expenditure. It was by purchasing that traditional policy that the House, in days past, humbled the power of kings, and it will have to apply the very same force now to humble ministers and to discharge the ancient fundamental duty. There is just as much danger from autocratic ministers to-day as there was from autocratic kings in past periods of our history.”

Another speaker said—

“Ministers must not imagine that they are possessed of some divine and supreme power. We want to restore to the House

of Commons, not merely the right to audit the expenses that are being incurred, but to control the financial policy and expenditure of the country.”

Those remarks are as applicable to Queensland to-day as they can possibly be to the House of Commons. Who can say—taking up the Financial Statement, taking up the Estimates, taking the Treasurer's tables and the Auditor-General's report—that we have a system here that “all who run may read?” We have no simple system which makes the Government accounts perfectly clear from year to year, and I say the time has come for some inquiry to have these accounts put in a simple way, in order that we may understand thoroughly that the accounts are in order, and that the functions of the Government have been carried out in accordance with the wishes of Parliament. Taking up the Auditor-General's report, we find reference to unforeseen expenditure. I know that it will be said that this is not common to the present Government. But one thing we can say about it is this: that unforeseen expenditure is becoming a much greater factor in connection with the accounts under the present Government than it ever was before. I would not be surprised to find, although the Financial Statement and the Estimates have only been placed on the table within such a short time as fourteen days ago, that perhaps thousands and thousands of pounds of unforeseen expenditure have already been provided for by Executive minute and we will hear nothing about it until the Supplementary Estimates are placed before us next year. That is not as it ought to be. The Auditor-General says on page 12 of his report—

“The question regarding the necessity for amending the Audit Act, particularly in so far as relates to unforeseen expenditure—was fully dealt with in my last annual report (pages 6 and 7), and I do not propose to reiterate any of my previous comments thereon, but, at the risk of being considered impertunate, I feel it to be my duty to again bring this matter under the notice of Parliament.”

And he proceeds in a table to show that during last year the unforeseen expenditure from revenue, trust, and loan fund, amounted to such a large sum at £621,461 0s. 11d. In his report of last year, in giving the figures of previous years in connection with the consolidated revenue, he said—

“When the present 1874 Audit Act was passed forty-two years ago, the financial transactions of this State were then comparatively small, and at that time it probably was not contemplated that unforeseen expenditure would expand as it has done, otherwise, I feel certain, some restriction or qualification in that respect would have been imposed. The law, as at present, opens the way or lends itself to departments—when preparing their estimates—understating their expenditure or requirements, knowing that subsequently they can supplement the amount as unforeseen expenditure by Executive authority. Some of the individual votes have every year to be thus supplemented. In the aggregate, these amount to a very considerable sum yearly. In addition to these amounts

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shown above, each year large sums are charged as unforeseen expenditure to the loan and trust funds—on Executive authority.

“The Treasurer’s warrants for unforeseen expenditure are not signed by me, consequently I have no responsibility in regard to authorising the payments. In view of the opinion of their Honours the judges on the subject, it will, however, I think, be recognised that it is most desirable that some definition or interpretation as to what constitutes unforeseen expenditure should be laid down and embodied in the Audit Act.”

Then he goes on to deal with the matter in connection with the Southern States, and he points out that the question was fully dealt with by the judges of the Supreme Court, who, he said, gave a very exhaustive and interesting exposition of their view of the law on the subject in a recent case. That goes to show that the Auditor-General himself has pointed out the unsatisfactory position that exists under the Audit Act, and points out the necessity, in the interests of the department, in the interests of the Government, and in the interests of Parliament, of so amending the Audit Act as to state just what is within the power of the Administration and what is reserved for Parliament. This is a matter that ought to receive the serious consideration of the Chamber, and it ought to receive the serious consideration of the Government. But, notwithstanding the fact that it has been pointed out by the Auditor-General, not one step has been taken to put matters right. We find, on the other hand, that the position has been simply extended. Last year, also, the Auditor-General made reference on page 58 of his report to State industrial undertakings, and I think it is a matter for regret that we have not got the Auditor-General’s report for this year on State undertakings for our consideration at this stage. This is the time when it can best be discussed, and it is a fair thing that Parliament should, at the only time it has got the opportunity of criticising Government accounts, have the material to enable it to consider what has been done—to offer such criticisms as appear to be necessary under the circumstances. The Auditor-General says—

“These undertakings are not governed by any special Act of Parliament. At present they are controlled by different Ministers, and the expenditure abstracts are passed through their respective departments and thence on to the Treasury for payment, whilst the receipts are remitted to the Treasury direct.

“It is most desirable that as early as possible an Act should be passed on similar lines to the one in operation in New South Wales, setting out a system in regard to the financial management of State undertakings.

“Amongst the matters—of a financial character—requiring statutory provision are the following:—Recognition of the present trading concerns, and making provision for the establishment of additional ones; how the funds are to be provided; prescribing the nature of the accounts to be kept and the determination of the capital cost; how sinking funds are to be charged and allotted;

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making provision for depreciation and the disposal of the surplus profits; also that an annual balance-sheet, trading account, and a profit and loss account shall be submitted yearly to both Houses of Parliament.”

That is the recommendation that was made by the Auditor-General, following upon the installation of State industries practically for the first time. It is a positive danger to the people of Queensland that the method of handling these accounts is not laid down by Parliament in such a way as Parliament regards as right and safe, having regard to the interests of all. Not one step appears to have been taken by the Government in regard to that recommendation of the Auditor-General. That indicates to me that there is a very loose method in connection with the carrying on of the Government accounts. We find serious reflections passed on the method in which accounts were kept in the Public Works Department. In these days, when the question of the cost of day labour and the question of the cost of doing work by contract are prominent questions, at least the accountancy ought to be of such a character in a department like the Public Works Department as would leave no room whatever for doubt on matters of that kind. If the condition of the keeping of the accounts is what it is stated to be in the Auditor-General’s report, which we have before us, then I say it would be impossible to get the material that we want.

Hon J. A. FHELLY: It took the Auditor-General three years to discover the defalcations in the Lands Department.

Mr. MACARTNEY: As I have already stated, the hon. gentleman is always irrelevant. He would like me to run away from the Works Department to the Lands Department. I will come to the Department of Justice directly. This is what the Auditor-General says with regard to the accountancy work in the Department of Public Works—

“Consequent on the carrying out of most of the works by the day-labour system, the accountancy work of this department has very considerably increased of late. The inspectors’ recent reports indicate that there is room for improvement in the method of dealing with the accounts, and there is evidence of weakness in the system of internal check. It would appear that, so far as the accounts branch is concerned, this department is either insufficiently staffed or requires to be reorganised.

“The matter has been brought under the attention of the Under Secretary, who is taking action to effect improvement.”

That condition of things ought not to exist. We find in the following paragraph the Auditor-General speaks in these terms of the accountancy branch of the Department of Justice:—

“Recent examinations of the accounts of this department revealed very great carelessness in that branch, and, as this unsatisfactory state of things had continued for fully eighteen months, I communicated with the Minister on the subject, and asked that some action be taken to ensure improvement, with the result,

I am pleased to say, that a change has now been made in the accountancy staff, and there is reason to believe that there will be no further cause for complaint."

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: An alteration was made immediately. The audit was so bad in one of the subdepartments that I had to call the attention of the Auditor-General to it—a pretended audit.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman will, no doubt, have his opportunity when the time comes. There are many other things incidental to the matter that I have mentioned that call for consideration and attention. The matter referred to this afternoon by the hon. member for Dalby also calls for serious consideration, and it calls for an immediate amendment of the Audit Act, defining the powers of the Ministry in regard to interference with a decision of this House. The hon. member for Dalby referred to the Loan Act of 1914, under which a loan was provided for to the amount of £8,245,068 for the specific purposes set forth in the Act—namely, railways, purchase of wire netting, Sugar Works Act of 1911, loans to local bodies, and "towards making good the deficits on loans issued under the Government Loan Acts of 1903, 1910, and 1911." That is to say, that amount of £8,245,068 was authorised for those express purposes, and for no other purposes whatsoever. Yet we find that, out of the debentures authorised by that Act, the Government are applying a large proportion to the payment for cattle stations, for which no provision was made in that Act; and the Auditor-General, dealing with the question, has pointed out, on page 16 of his report, that—

"Since the 30th June, Vanrook Station, including cattle and horses, has been purchased at a cost of £253,000, of which £166,800 was invested by the vendors in debentures."

Hon. members will notice that the Auditor-General uses the words, "was invested." Those words are used to give the transaction the colour of legal authority. But he goes on in the next paragraph to say—

"With regard to the purchase of station and other properties, it would appear, from certain expressions in the records relating to these purchases, that Government debentures constitute part of the purchase money."

That is just where the point comes in. If the contracts under which the Government purchased those stations were placed on the table of this Chamber, we would find that the transactions were the purchase by the Government of the stations for a total sum of money, part of which should be in cash, and part of which should be in debentures. The Auditor-General continues—

"I am advised, however, by the Crown Solicitor that, in a legal sense, debentures under the Government Loan Act of 1914 cannot be applied in payment of the purchase money of stations."

And why? Because that Loan Act specially states the purposes for which the loan was authorised, and for which the debentures should be issued; and I say it is an extraordinary thing that any Government—I do not care whether it is Liberal or Labour—

should be allowed, in the face of the provision in an Act of that sort, to take the debentures which are authorised for railways and the other purposes I have quoted and apply them to purposes such as the purchase of cattle stations.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Wouldn't your Chil-lagoe company have taken debentures if we had given them? Didn't your firm apply to the Government to give you debentures?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not care which Government it is, the principle to be followed is that when this House decides that debentures are to be issued for a particular purpose, then the debentures shall be used for that purpose and for no other purpose whatsoever.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: I can show you a letter from your firm asking for debentures.

Mr. MACARTNEY: My firm has nothing to do with this matter, right or wrong, and I again ask the hon. gentleman to keep clear of irrelevancy. The Loan Act of 1914 specifies the purposes for which those debentures were to be issued, and I say it is not only illegal, but it is absolutely dishonest, to use those debentures for any other purpose than those specified in the Act.

Hon. J. A. FHELLY: Your partner cried in the other House because the Government would not grant your request.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We find that the Crown Solicitor advised the Auditor-General that, in a legal sense, debentures under the Loan Act of 1914 cannot be applied in payment of the purchase money of stations. Yet what do we find afterwards? The Auditor-General goes on to say—

"What really happens is, the purchase money of the stations is provided from unforeseen expenditure under warrants signed by the Governor, but not countersigned by me. I am aware that the power of the Executive in this respect is practically unlimited."

Apparently, by Executive minute, the expenditure of this money is authorised—that is to say, a sum of money is authorised to be used for the purpose of purchasing cattle station—presumably money taken from the consolidated revenue. That is the authority that is given. But that is not the only thing that is done with reference to these debentures that are devoted to the purchase of these cattle stations. The Auditor-General goes further, and says—

"I am informed that it is, in effect, made a condition of the purchase that some portion of the price should be invested by the purchaser in Government debentures, which are issued under the authority of the Government Loan Act of 1914."

That is to say, he is advised by the Attorney-General that this condition of the purchase of a station, the agreement for the purchase of which provides for the giving of so much in cash and so much in debentures, is not really that transaction at all, but it is, in effect, a condition that the person who sells his station shall invest some portion of the purchase money in the taking up of these debentures. If that was intended, an agreement of that sort is very easily made. But that is not the agreement, and I venture to

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say, in view of the agreements that were actually made, that the whole of the transactions are not only illegal but they are contrary to the intention of Parliament when it passed the Loan Act of 1914. In the next paragraph the Auditor-General tells us who is the person who advised him. He says—

“I have been advised by the Hon. the Attorney-General that there is no legal objection to my countersigning debentures issued under these circumstances.”

I think it is a mistake for the Attorney-General to advise the Auditor-General, an officer of this House, in a matter that so closely affects himself as the head of a Government who are endeavouring to break down the provisions of a Loan Act of Parliament, and also the provisions of the Audit Act, which lay down the rules for the guidance both of the Auditor-General and of the Government in matters of this kind. I think it is an anomalous position, and the Auditor-General ought to be in a position to take outside opinions in matters of this sort. He ought not to have to get one of the parties to a dispute, in the person of the Attorney-General, to give him advice, because it is the Premier, for the time being, who wants to break through the restrictions that Parliament lays upon him. The Auditor-General is appointed, as an officer of Parliament, to report to Parliament, and I say the Attorney-General is not the man to advise him in matters of this sort. It is not disinterested advice; and, I say again, it is absolutely improper advice. I say the sooner that both sides of this House see the wisdom of putting the Auditor-General in a position where he will be free of any undue influence, the better. I said that when sitting on that side of the House in 1909 or 1910.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: When sitting in the Ministry in 1912, what did you do?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have no time for the hon. gentleman. I think the practice of the Commonwealth Parliament—which provides that the Auditor-General in connection with any matter on which he may have doubt, shall take an opinion and shall, in his report to Parliament, give all the opinions he receives during the currency of the financial year—is a good practice. I think it is a very good one to be introduced into the practice of our own State.

There is another matter I would like to say a word or two about. Reference was made on the adjournment of the House a week or two ago to some comments made by His Honour the Chief Justice in connection with the position of the Public Defender and also certain remarks in reference to jury matters. I think it a matter for regret that the Premier, holding the position he does—the position of Attorney-General—should have made an improper use of the opportunity of asking questions affecting the business of the House on the motion for adjournment of the House to make a statement of the character he did. There are certain matters in connection with the administration of justice in which we ought to be only too glad to have expressions of opinions from our judges. The administration of justice should be placed on a particularly high plane, and when our judges think it necessary to make certain remarks, I say

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that even if those remarks are sometimes wrong—unintentionally wrong—we ought to give them encouragement to make remarks that bid for the perfection of the administration of justice. Personally, I am of the opinion that the same department cannot do justice to the prosecution on behalf of the Crown and to the defence of the prisoners.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Would you leave the prisoner undefended?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say the same department cannot do justice in both cases.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Your Government left the prisoner undefended.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am going to make my speech in my own way. I say that the man who takes the position of head of the Department of Justice ought to beware of the position that places any doubt, or suspicion, in respect to the administration of justice. I say you cannot have the prosecution and the defence of prisoners conducted by the same department without a certain amount of danger—a certain amount of risk. I say that His Honour the Chief Justice was perfectly within his rights, and I think he has done a public good in calling attention to the position that exists.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: While this Government is here every prisoner will get defence.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not wish the hon. gentleman to draw me into irrelevancies. We know that since this Government came into power the system of releasing men who were in gaol was adopted in a wider sense than it was ever adopted before, and it was adopted without those safeguards which were provided by their predecessors. They have not the time to be burdened with those safeguards; they do not take the care which their predecessors had hitherto taken, and the abuses which have followed have been a matter of public comment. Precautions used to be taken in connection with the release of prisoners, and those precautions have been thrown to the winds. Things have been done which I could speak of in scathing terms. I do not know why hon. gentlemen desire to free themselves of these ordinary safeguards.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: Why don't you quote your cases? Be manly now.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that abuses must exist, if in the one department you have the prosecution conducted by officers of the Crown, and the defence also conducted by officers of the Crown, and all drawing from the same department—from the police and other subdepartments—information regarding juries. Must you not expect that the man who is defending a prisoner will get the same information from the police as the prosecution have got. I say that abuses have existed, and will exist while affairs are carried on in that way. It seems to me that hon. gentlemen on the Government side have more regard for the criminal than for the public.

Hon. J. A. FIELLY: I have no regard for you, or your friends, the judges.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not expect the hon. gentleman to have regard for anything that is good. I say that His Honour the

Chief Justice was perfectly within his rights in making the comments he did; and, right or wrong, we ought to encourage our judges to throw out any hints that may be of assistance in connection with the administration of justice. Having spoken to a man who came from the district involved in this particular case, I say His Honour's remarks in regard to the jury were perfectly justified. I am not going to refer to that matter further.

In connection with the motion before the Chamber, which has relation to taxation, I can only say I think it is a pity we are endeavouring to impose further taxation on the people of Queensland at the present moment. As has been stated, the recent revenue has been larger than ever it was in the history of the State. If there had been a fall in revenue—such as there was in 1900, 1901, 1902, or 1903—I could understand the need for extra taxation. But, at the present time, when the Commonwealth are trying to get all the funds necessary for the purposes of the war—I have said it before and I say it again—the State, as a State, is not acting loyally in further taxing the people in competition with the Commonwealth. I say that taxes of the kind which are sought to be imposed are, in some instances, unreasonable and unjust. The land

tax is a tax, generally speaking, [9 p.m.] that is a bad one or a good one from the point of view from which it is looked at. The land tax we have in Queensland at the present time is not just in proportion nor fair in its incidence, from the country point of view, as stated by a large number of hon. members in this House. I say that the land tax, as affecting city properties, has been practically carried on to the point of confiscation. I say that deliberately. There are freehold properties in the city of Brisbane that have been so heavily taxed by the present Government that they have returned to the person who invested in them, in some cases nothing at all, and in other cases not more than 1 or 2 per cent. I can point out case after case in which the taxation has amounted to absolute robbery. Yet we find a motion now before the Chamber which states that a further tax of 2d. in the £1 is going to be added to the tax I have just referred to. I would like to read for the information of the Chamber and for the information of those who read "Hansard" a letter which was addressed to the Land Tax Commissioner by Mr. William Haigh, of Ipswich, in reference to a property in Queen street—

"8th December, 1916.

"The State Commissioner of Taxes,
Brisbane.

"Dear Sir,—I enclose a cheque for £270 19s. and 1s. stamps. Assessment No. A 15076 on Queen street shops, but in doing so feel compelled to express my astonishment at your Government making such extravagant and confiscatory demands on property-owners (for home consumption only) in contra-distinction to all other members of the community, and to give expression to the feeling that the incidence of this State land tax seems to be a form of spoliation and robbery, especially in view of many of the unavoidable demands made and still to be made by the Federal Government more immediately for war purposes.

"The following figures, based on this year's assessment of the Queen street property taxed under Assessment No. A 15076, as above, should, I think, give rise to serious consideration by all members of the community, and also more especially by the legislators who are responsible for bringing about such a state of affairs as is herein disclosed:—

Approximate annual rental for 1916 connected with the above assessment	...	£1,100 0 0
State land tax paid May, 1916	...	£223 5 5
State land tax paid November, 1916	214 13 4	
State land tax paid November, 1916, being a super tax, the estimated value of the improvements being less than 25 per cent. of the estimated value of the freehold land	55 18 11	
State income tax paid April, 1916	33 8 10	
Federal income tax paid March, 1916	25 18 9	
Federal land tax paid June, 1916	80 17 9	
Estimated fire insurance, twelve months	39 0 0	
Estimated maintenance, twelve months	28 0 0	
Estimated municipal and water board rates and taxes	121 0 0	
	£822 3 0	822 0 0
Surplus	...	£278 0 0

I calculate that the effect of the super tax, which is included in this, will amount to £125. Taking that off the £278, we find that there will be £153 left as the result of the investment in this property, which has an unimproved value of £16,000. That is the approximate value placed on this property by both the State and Federal Governments, Mr. Haigh further says—

"It may be further noted, however, that the above items cover only a part of the proposed taxation, as both the Federal and State Governments have initiated claims for a further increase of 20 or 25 per cent. on the existing income tax rates, in addition to which a repatriation tax of 1½ per cent. has also been foreshadowed. In reply to all this, it may be urged quite naturally on your own part that a great deal of this taxation is originated by the Federal Government, for which your Government is not in any way responsible. Well, granted that such is the case, still, nevertheless, the Federal taxation is intended to be mainly for war purposes, and as such has never been resented, but the Queensland State taxation is largely for State and other non-essential purposes, and the enormity of

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the land tax imposed, instead of curtailment of expenditure, is, under the circumstances, bitterly resented as extortionate and unjustifiable, more especially as three-fourths of the State population are not contributing what they might reasonably and equitably be expected to do towards the public revenue. The irony of the situation is, however, manifestly in the fact that the owner is not allowed to deduct from the assessment the amount of the tax claimed, and so may probably be compelled to submit ultimately to the loss of his or her entire income.

"The above is not a fanciful, isolated, or imaginary case, but is certainly identical with the financial pressing difficulties of a large number of property owners, who have invested in many instances their savings (often of a lifetime) in city property as a provision for old age.

"Surely it is a situation that should appeal to legislators in their onward present course of extravagant and unjustifiable expenditure, lightly conceived, but unveiled, as to its baneful effects in the numerous concrete examples daily coming to light. Another feature that may well be considered in this connection is the certain effect of such taxation on the sale value of landed property, seeing that it is in consequence gradually becoming more interest-bearing to owners and unremunerative as an investment. Finally, as to the extra or super tax of £56 imposed in this assessment, now under consideration in consequence of the estimated value of improvements not equaling 25 per cent. of the estimated value of the land, permit me to point out the injustice and the destructive effect of such a provision.

"The buildings in this case are substantial brick buildings, three stories high, which occupy the whole of the Queen street frontage, with a right-of-way at the rear. The tenants of the shops will not occupy the upper floor, and consequently that flat is let as offices. If, however, this building, and many others similarly affected, were in consequence of this regulation pulled down and lofty ones erected as demanded to meet the case, there would be an entire surfeit of vacant upper floors and offices in Queen street, and further difficulties would certainly arise in raising the necessary capital on securities detrimentally affected by such taxation. Manifestly, you cannot force on the erection of expensive structures in a city beyond the power of economic occupation, and any attempt in that direction would certainly bring about financial ruin to many if tried. Legislators sitting in caucus ought to have foreseen the utter impracticability of applying such a theory to city properties, and it is surely not too much to ask that there shall be a reconsideration of the State land tax proposals, with a view to decreasing its extortionate and destructive incidence."

The Income Tax Commissioner's reply to that letter was a proper one. He said it was more a political matter than a matter for him.

The PREMIER: Would you mind reading the reply of the Income Tax Commissioner if you have got it?

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Mr. MACARTNEY: I have, at any rate, got the contents of the reply of the Income Tax Commissioner. He states—

"The points raised were political, and, therefore, did not concern his department."

Mr. FOLEY: Is that all he said?

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is quite enough.

The PREMIER: It is a very proper answer.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I consider that that letter provides some matter for the consideration of this House, and for the consideration of the hon. gentleman. When we remember that this tax largely was excused on the ground that it was intended to [9 p.m.] burst up big estates, and we come to realise that these big estates, the subject-matter of this letter, only amount to 16 perches, you can imagine that there is something wanting in the reason that was offered in support of that legislation.

The PREMIER: Presumably, an exceptional case.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is only a case which applies in dozens and dozens of the streets of Brisbane to-day, and can be found in the large streets of the country towns of Queensland. There can be no question about it, and when one remembers that every £5 of land tax that is taken either from the farmer or the city owner means a reduction in the capital value of his property to the extent of something like £100, one must remember that every land taxpayer in the State has got some cause for anxiety and some cause for complaint against the Government. The suggestion of the erection of expensive buildings on the land, which is conveyed in one of the taxation conditions, has been very clearly answered by Mr. Haigh in that letter. Even if it could be done, you find that the taxation placed upon it prevents the people raising the money necessary. Surely the hon. member must see there is something in the nature of injustice there! I admit that the letter shows that the land tax was paid twice in the particular year. It is right to point that out: but even pointing that out the burden falls on the owner in such a way that I cannot imagine the hon. member or his colleagues, or the leading officers of the public service, who give attention to these matters—

The PREMIER: I can assure the hon. member that I would like to let everybody off taxation if I could.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member may say that. I am not going to dispute that with him at the present moment, but I say that the hon. member cannot realise that that is the effect of the taxation on the larger number of properties in every city or town in Queensland, and that he should give consideration to it.

The PREMIER: I admit that there are exceptional cases, but that is not the general rule.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that is not an exceptional case, because the cases are so numerous as almost to compel the hon. member to admit generality. What is the effect of it going to be? As was stated by the hon. member for Burrum the other night, every penny of taxation that is put on the people—it may only be transferring the

money from one pocket to the other—eventually comes on the enterprise of the community and the industrial side of the community. Surely the hon. member will realise that the case I have mentioned to-night is of very frequent occurrence, and one that requires some consideration, and certainly one that ought to prevent him putting blindly a supertax of 2d. in the £1 on people who are already taxed beyond their capability to pay. I say again that the hon. member may yet experience this result—that the legislation of the hon. member and the conditions laid down in the course of administration will sit so heavily on enterprise in this country that there will be a reflex action before long. The Treasurer, in his Statement, is particular to say that there is something he cannot understand; that there is something under the surface in connection with the falling off of the railway revenue. Is it not possible that this legislation and administration are affecting enterprise, are affecting production, and in the course of time will seriously affect the Government finances and the stability of the State? There are innumerable instances showing that.

Now, we come to the question of the income tax. I have no objection whatever to any man or woman who gets £3,000 or more a year having to pay his or her share of income tax. All I can say is that I wish I was in that position; I would gladly pay the income tax. But I say that the income tax should be levied so as not to interfere with enterprise, and it should be imposed in such a way that the income is caught, as in the case of the Federal authorities, in the hands of the people who receive the income instead of in the hands of the companies. If you take the income tax from the company on the gross earnings of the company, you are only, after all, taking a larger tax than you would from the individuals who divide that profit amongst them. I say it is perfectly justifiable to tax the income of a company, but the income is not justly that of the company, but of the shareholders, and the proper method is, as the Federal Government are doing, to tax it in the hands of the people who get it and are able to spend it. If they keep it for purpose of accretion or reserves, by all means levy a tax on that, but tax the income so that the incidence of it will fall fairly on the man according to the amount of income he receives. I say that the effect of taxing in this way only results in interfering with enterprise, and the Government have not got to that stage where they can do without enterprise, if our State is going to be a success.

The PREMIER: We are encouraging enterprise. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member says he is encouraging enterprise. The hon. member's every act is against enterprise. Certainly enterprises are going on still, but they are enterprises that are only profitable to the individual. They are not of that character which is profitable for the State.

The PREMIER: What are you referring to?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am referring to brief barons, and others of that character.

The PREMIER: The usual spleen from Toowong. I did not think you would get down to the gutter like that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the hon. member would not interject he would not get the answer.

The PREMIER: I was really trying to get what you were referring to.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You are encouraging strike enterprises, not encouraging that general enterprise that is good for the State.

The PREMIER: An insulting slanderer—that is all you are.

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

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): It has been said to-night that this is one of the most important debates that could take place in this House, but listening to a number of members of the Opposition one has to conclude that they treated it in a very frivolous way indeed. Quite a number of them never touched on the Financial Statement at all. They have launched out in abuse of the Government, calling them robbers, and saying that they are doing everything to kill the industries of the State. That is about all they can say. The hon. member for Murilla got up the other night and started off by calling this Financial Statement a "financial drunk." Why, I could go to the Goodna Asylum and take the very worst inmate there and put him in the hon. member's place and he would say the same. I asked him where money was wrongfully spent and he never said a word about it. He launched out about the Public Works Commission, and he was contemptible enough to say that members of that commission had their minds made up to turn down a railway in his electorate before they went to inspect. I say that a more contemptible statement could not fall from the lips of any man.

The hon. member for Murilla distinctly set out to slander the chairman of the Public Works Commission, Mr. Gillies, member for Eacham. I have no hesitation in saying that during the whole course of my life I have never met a more honorable and conscientious man than the hon. member for Eacham. Members on the opposite side of the House have risen in their places and made all manner of extravagant statements about the Government. I have listened carefully to the whole of the debate, and I have not heard any evidence to show that the Government have done anything wrong as far as their finances are concerned. Not one hon. member has pointed out where the Government have done anything wrong as far as the finances of the country are concerned. If the Win-the-war crowd, who are always preaching patriotism, had any patriotism in them, they would not be doing what they are doing at the present time with regard to the present Government. We all know that this is the only Labour Government in Australia, and that the whole power of capital and the whole power of every other Government in Australia have got this Government set. Look at all the law cases this Government have been forced into. The democracy of Queensland should be very thankful indeed that we have a man at the head of the Government capable of handling the affairs of the State as the present Premier is. Where would the Labour Government in Queensland be to-day if we had not at its head a man who has ability to defend our cases in the highest courts in the land? Hon. members opposite have talked

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about the waste of money by the Government, but they are more responsible for wasting money than the Government, because they have forced the Government into litigation. All the powers of the conservative and capitalistic class in the Commonwealth are against the Government.

Let me dwell for a moment now on the great strike. When speaking on the Address in Reply the other night, I said that I believed in peace and that I would like to see peace among all mankind. But I do not believe in peace if the workers of this country have to humiliate themselves to the position of slaves in order to earn a living. The shipping companies have been backed up by the Opposition and the other Chamber in their attempt to bring the strike from New South Wales into Queensland. Honest men must recognise that attempts have been made to bring that strike here. Why? Because this is the only State in Australia which has a Labour Government, and because this is the only Government in Australia that has settled a strike in a reasonable and intelligent kind of way. People say that the unionists will not handle this, and will not do that, and that unionists will not work with "black labour." I give every unionist in Australia credit for not working with a "scab," not working with a man who would try to undermine him in earning a living, and who would make it more difficult for his wife and children to get the ordinary comforts of life. The Opposition, the Upper House, and the Federal Government, have done everything in their power to bring chaos into Queensland. Nearly three-fourths of the men who have enlisted from Australia are members of some union or another.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: That is a pure statement.

Mr. PAYNE: Hon. members opposite and those they represent howled for the conscription of life, and those gentlemen are now standing up for the strikers in Sydney being wiped out. Dean Talbot, who put in his time with the Australians at the front, has said that he has seen the Australians in every phase of life, that he has been drawn towards the bushmen and workers of Australia, and that 90 per cent. of the men he saw on all the fronts were unionists. Yet we have this Win-the-war crowd howling for conscription, and trying to get able-bodied unionists out of the country, so that when they are away they may smash up their organisations. That is what is behind all this. A deliberate attempt is being made to destroy and burst up every Labour organisation in Australia while the big majority of their members are away fighting for the Empire; and that is what they call patriotism. I only ask fair play, and for a reasonable thing. I am satisfied that it would be an easy thing to settle this strike if Mr. Hughes or Mr. Fuller would only show a little common sense such as was shown by our own Premier. If they did that, they could easily settle the strike without humiliating themselves, and get the wheels of industry moving in a smooth way throughout Australia. But we know very well what is behind all their actions. I believe that a big majority of the men in Australia who are always proclaiming their patriotism would rather defeat the Labour movement in this country than win the war in which the Empire is now engaged. So bitter have they become against

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Labour that they have set out in a definite way to undermine this Labour Government and every Labour organisation.

The PREMIER: A campaign of slander.

Mr. PAYNE: Yes, a campaign of slander.

The PREMIER: That the public are seeing through.

Mr. PAYNE: While I believe that any member of the Opposition is perfectly within his rights in honestly criticising any action of the Government, I do not think they should make all manner of unreasonable statements for which there is not one word of justification. I have been in this House for thirteen years, and I have never heard a body of men so utterly regardless of facts and truth as the present Opposition are, so far as the Government are concerned. The only explanation of such conduct seems to be that there is a general election looming in sight, and they think that by making those misstatements they are going to gull the people of the country. I believe that when the Government appeal to the electors they will come back with a bigger majority than they have at the present time.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: Oh, Cæsar!

Mr. PAYNE: I have travelled over Queensland a good deal lately, and I claim to have just as much common sense as the hon. member for Lockyer, and I can say that in every centre I have visited throughout the length and breadth of Queensland the people are sick and tired of this win-the-war cry. (Hear, hear!) Men that were ardent supporters of the Win-the-war party, really believed that they were going to do something to win the war more [9.30 p.m.] quickly than anyone else, and were carried away by their feelings, but they are now losing that idea. We have an instance in Western Australia of the way the pendulum is swinging round. If you make inquiries for yourself, you will find that the farmers of this State recognise what the Government have done. I have heard members of the Opposition interjecting to-night, and I want to get the position into "Hansard," so as to let the farmers read it and see the dreadful statements hon. members opposite are making. They are saying that the dairy farmers of Queensland are selling their herds to pay the land tax.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: So they are.

Mr. PAYNE: It is a deliberate misstatement. I have been through the farming community in the Bell, Kingaroy, and other districts, and I have letters in my pocket from the farmers, telling me that they were never in a more prosperous condition in their life, and are quite satisfied with the present Government. We know that the Opposition recognise that the farmers are turning away from them because of the unreasonable and uncalled-for statements which they are making.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: There are farmers in the Lockyer district coming down here to take higher wages in Brisbane and leaving their farms.

Mr. PAYNE: The farmers in the Lockyer district will wipe the hon. member out next time. (Laughter.) I say that in a friendly way. The farmers in the Lockyer district

are organising at the present time to put the hon. member out at the next election.

Hon. W. D. ARMSTRONG: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. PAYNE: We have only to wait until the next general election is over to see who is correct. The Financial Statement shows a deficit for the year just passed of £253,000.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is a mere bagatelle. (Laughter.)

Mr. PAYNE: It would be very much better if the ledger was squared. I will admit, but if you take into consideration what this Government have had to pass through, the money that it has had to forego in different directions, owing to the tremendous opposition to their taxation proposals both here and in the other House—

Hon. J. TOLMIE interjected.

Mr. PAYNE: The taxation on incomes over £3,000 would have greatly reduced this deficit. Is there anyone bold enough to say that a man getting an income of over £3,000 a year cannot afford to pay a little more taxation at the present time? We have men in this country who have more regard for money than for human lives. They care nothing at all about the lives of the best men in this country; but when you touch their pockets they really go mad. Look at the agitation we have had all through Australia about the conscription of life. Have you ever read anything about the conscription of wealth? You have never heard one of the great moneyed people in this country, who has put money into the war loan, say that they were prepared to give their money without interest. I claim that the least they could do was to give their money without interest; that, if necessary, they ought to give their money altogether, and then they would not give as much as the men who have shouldered their rifles and gone into the firing line. I know hundreds of men in my electorate who have left good billets to take up a rifle at 5s. a day, and not to make money out of it.

Mr. CARTER: To defend their lives.

Mr. PAYNE: They had a spirit which drove them to the war, and they are fighting at the front. After all, the moneyed classes of this country have very much more to protect than the working men. We have heard a lot from the hon. member for Toowong about the tremendous taxation on some of our city properties. The city property in Brisbane should pay taxation. I would like to see the big bulk of the land tax got from city property, and the farmers taxed as lightly as possible. The men and women in the country, who are rearing big families, which are going to be our greatest asset, as we have lost so many men at the war, should be let off as much as possible; and the men in the city who are doing nothing at all, and who, perhaps, bought their land at a very small cost and benefited by the construction of roads and other improvements, should pay the biggest share of land taxation. As I said before, if this Government had had a fair deal, there would not have been any deficit at all.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: What do you call a fair deal?

Mr. PAYNE: I will give you some reasons as to what I think is a fair deal. I stated earlier in my remarks that the "National Win-the-war Government" are going out of their way to stifle this Government

in every move they are making to bring about peace amongst strikers and normal conditions in the State. I find that the Federal Government have even deducted between £50,000 and £60,000 per year since the war started on account of the number of men who have left this State for the front. The Commonwealth is supposed to return 25s. per capita for the inhabitants of this State, and during the first two years of the war Queensland has lost about £100,000 through their men being away. These men are considered citizens of the State, and have their names on the roll, but because they went into the firing-line the State has lost that £100,000, and it is estimated that a sum of £60,000 will be lost to the State through the absence of these men during 1917-18. The least that the Commonwealth could have done was to have paid the State on account of the men who have gone to the front, as their homes are here, their parents are here, and they are recognised citizens of this State. I find, again, that through the influence of the Opposition in stopping certain legislation that was proposed by the Government and which passed through this Chamber but was defeated in the Legislative Council—that is the taxing of incomes over £3,000—that the Government lost somewhere about £180,000. They also lost between £40,000 and £50,000 that was to be devoted out of that sum to repatriation and assistance to returned soldiers. I also find—through the actions of the Opposition and their friends in another place—that there is no possibility of this Government squaring the accounts of this country unless they turn round and tax the man on the lowest rung of the ladder. We have heard a good deal about the taxation proposals; about what this Government should have done and what they should not have done. This Government has shown good statesmanship in keeping things normal during these abnormal times. This Government is out to tax those people who are best able to bear the burden, but there is no possibility, while the Legislative Council is constituted as at present, of this Government carrying out a policy of progress and fair play to the people of this country. If this Government was to bring in a poll tax of £1 a head on every man in Queensland it would pass through the Upper House. Members of the Opposition say they believe in a poll tax. Is that the kind of taxation that they want this Government to bring in? They will not speak. I want to know from the leader of the Opposition in what way he is going to assist this Government to square the finances of this State during these troublous times?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I will tell you next July.

Mr. PAYNE: I want to know whether you wish the Government to raise the fares and freights, or whether you wish the Government to tax the man on the land. I ask the Opposition whether they are prepared to help the Government through these troublous times.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We are not called upon to help the Government.

Mr. PAYNE: You made a statement, as leader of the Opposition, at the beginning of this session of Parliament, that you were prepared to do your best to help the Government over these troublous times.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: If you come to me in a proper way I will give you all the assistance I can.

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Mr. PAYNE: You must recognise that the earnings of the railways have been cut down considerably on account of the tremendous high cost of materials. You must recognise that in every other walk of life to-day costs have increased enormously.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: If you look at the stores account you will see that there is not such a tremendous difference.

Mr. PAYNE: At the present time it costs more than twice as much as in previous years to purchase the necessary articles to carry on that business. Do you deny that?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: There are a lot of things that I deny.

Mr. PAYNE: Do you mean to say that the ordinary rails used in railway construction are not twice as dear as they were two years ago? Do you mean to say that every article required during the last year has not increased in price a hundredfold?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: How have I offended you that you are directing all your remarks to me personally?

The PREMIER: There is no one else worth addressing over there.

Mr. PAYNE: I have heard a good deal about the mismanagement of our railways and we have been told that so much could be saved. I do not know how the railways are managed, but this Government has only been in office a little over two years, and if there is any mismanagement in connection with the railways it has been caused by the previous Government. You could not expect this Government to take over such a huge concern as the Queensland railways and put them on a different footing in two and a-half years. The hon. member for Murilla the other night complained that the workmen in the Ipswich workshops were allowed a quarter of an hour each day to wash their hands, and he worked the cost out at the enormous sum of £10,000 a year. Will any member of the Opposition rise in his place and say that the men working in our Railway Department are getting too much wages? If I thought they were getting too much in wages I would say so.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The hon. member for Dalby insinuated it.

Mr. PAYNE: The hon. member for Dalby stated that the railways were overmanned—that they were falling over one another; that it took five men to do one man's work. That is in keeping with some of the other statements that have fallen from the Opposition. I would not mind the Opposition making such statements if they could only substantiate them. It is their business to criticise, but they have no right to get up and make incorrect statements of that nature. I do not believe any Commissioner would keep five men to do one man's work.

Mr. VOWLES: Why have you appointed a commission to find out?

Mr. PAYNE: That commission was appointed to try and undo some of the wrongs created by previous Governments. There was supposed to be some leakages in connection with the railways, and the commission is out to try and ascertain where those leakages are. Those leakages were not created by the present Government. It is all moonshine to say that a Government that has only been in power two and a-half years could undo a great business concern like the Queensland railways in that short period. We know very well it could not be done. I think the Government have done fairly well,

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and had we experienced normal times, no war, and no drought, this Government would have shown the people of Queensland their capabilities in such a way that there would never have been any chance of moving them from the Treasury benches. They took office in the very worst period that Queensland has known, in a period of drought, and war, and disorganisation of industries created by the Tories. The disorganisation of the railways in New South Wales was deliberately created by the introduction of the card system, and ever since that dispute has existed in New South Wales efforts have been made to extend it to Queensland in order to cause this Government—the only Labour Government in Australia—as much difficulty as possible. Some reference was made to the Public Works Commission by the hon. member for Murilla—a man who is capable of saying anything. He has no regard for fact; he speaks in a most unscrupulous way, and makes tremendously rash statements. He talked about the expense of the commission. I dealt on a previous occasion with his statement about the commission going into his electorate with their minds made up to turn down the proposed railway from Jundah to Taroom. I said before that that was a contemptible statement to make. I would ask any member on the other side to read the report of the commission on that line carefully, and say whether, from a land settlement point of view, it was possible to make any other report than we did? The whole of the evidence proved conclusively that for the whole distance from Jundah to Taroom no one would take up any of that land if he got it for nothing; it was so heavily infested with prickly-pear. The Denham Government were responsible for that state of affairs. They purchased Jundah Station for a good many thousands of pounds, and they allowed the land to lie there until it became so infested with prickly-pear that men would not take it up, and those who did try to clear it had to seek a living elsewhere after spending all their money in the endeavour to clear the land of pear. No common-sense Australian, who knows the value of land, and who is familiar with the conditions surrounding land settlement in that district, after reading the sworn evidence taken by the commission, could come to any other conclusion than that we could not possibly recommend the building of that railway. In conclusion, I say that, in spite of all the antics of the Opposition, their friends in the Upper House, and their friends in the National Parliament, the Government are going to come out on top. They are going to prove to the workers of this country that they are the only Government in Australia to-day who have the backbone to stand up for the workers—the only wealth-producers in this or any other country—and when the time comes the wealth-producers will not forget them.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again on Tuesday next.

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That this House do now adjourn. The business on Tuesday will be the continuation of the debate on the Financial Statement, to be followed by the rest of the business as it appears on the paper.

Question put and passed.

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