

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER 1917

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 31 OCTOBER, 1917.

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

QUESTIONS.

TOTALISATOR COMPANY.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Assistant Minister for Justice—

"1. Is it a fact that on 11th November and 16th December, 1916, the totalisator company in Brisbane short-paid the public the sums of £25 and £207 9s. 9d., which sums represent dividends on winning horses?"

"2. Were the tickets in question issued to the public, or did a mistake occur in the working of the machine?"

"3. What is the name of the company involved?"

"4. How long did the company retain these moneys?"

"5. Has the whole of this money been paid into the Treasury?"

"6. If not, what amount was so received by the Treasury?"

"7. Did the company in question pay any penalty in respect of this omission?"

"8. Will he place on the table of the House all correspondence, police and other reports, relative to these cases?"

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

"1. The full particulars, as supplied by Justice Department to the Auditor-General, can be seen on page 53 of the Auditor-General's report.

"2. Carelessness of mechanics alleged in each case. Tickets were issued in one case, but not issued in the other. In the first case, the manager maintained that he had instructed his secretary to pay the amount in to the Treasury, and his instructions were ignored. In the second case, proprietors held that as they took the risk of losing and the tickets were registered before the start of the race, it was a legitimate investment for themselves. However, the Minister decided that no one inside a machine should benefit, and the money was paid into revenue.

"3. Hodsdon.

"4. From 11th November, 1916, to 26th May, 1917, and 16th December, 1916, to 1st June, 1917, respectively.

"5. Yes.

"6. See No. 5.

"7. No.

"8. The documents may be perused at the Justice Department."

RETURN OF INSPECTION FEE BY STATE SAVINGS BANK.

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

"1. In the event of an agricultural applicant being offered half of an advance applied for by him from the State

Savings Bank, and refusing same, what proportion of his inspection fee is now returned?"

"2. Under similar circumstances what proportion was previously returned?"

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—

"1. No refund is now made.

"2. No refund was legally payable, but under a misinterpretation of the regulations a refund of two-thirds of the fee was made."

DICKSON AWARD AT PROSERPINE MILL.

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

"If the amount paid by the mill under the retrospective provisions of the Dickson award will form part of the indebtedness to the State to be paid off by the Proserpine cane-growers before the mill becomes their property?"

The TREASURER replied—

"The amount has been charged to working expenses, as are all increased wages under industrial awards."

LIGHTING AT GRACEVILLE, SHERWOOD, AND CORINDA RAILWAY STATIONS.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), for Mr. Hodge, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the average cost per month for lighting the following railway stations:—Graceville, Sherwood, and Corinda, respectively?"

"2. What is the number of lights used at each station?"

"3. What is used at each station, respectively, to produce such light?"

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

"1. Graceville, £5 16s. 3d.; Sherwood, £19 18s. 2d.; Corinda, £25 15s.

"2. Graceville, 23; Sherwood, 33; Corinda, 40.

"3. Graceville, air gas; Sherwood, acetylene; Corinda, acetylene."

INCOME TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the TREASURER, this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS BILL.

THIRD READING.

On the motion of the PREMIER (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*), this Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

Hon. T. J. Ryan.]

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—SECOND ALLOTTED DAY.

(Mr. Bertram, Marce, in the chair.)

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT—CHIEF OFFICE.

Question—That £51,591 be granted for "Railways—General Establishment, Chief Office"—stated—

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): As we have no canals or navigable rivers, we are dependent upon our railways as highways of trade, and in that respect they were the most important financial affairs that we had to discuss. He had always argued that our railways were not run upon a business system. A very large amount of the earnings of the railways went to the Lands Department, and were used to reduce the taxation of the towns and cities, whereas the earnings of the railways should certainly go into the Railway Department and be used for the extension of the railways and in the reduction of railway freights. If a new railway was built into Crown lands, it stood to reason that the rates on those lands of necessity went up when the Crown came to revalue the lands, and the increased rental was a very considerable amount and could be taken, on the average, as a half-penny per acre for 40 miles back from the railway. The Land Court assessed many of the rentals at from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d., and from 3d. and 4d. up to 6d. a mile, whereas the Treasurer thought nothing at all of putting 9d. or 10d. of land taxation on freehold lands. The people who owned freehold lands were paying three or four times the amount in taxation that the leaseholder paid in rent. How was it possible for stockowners and dairymen to compete when the actual taxes on freehold land were three or four times the rental of leasehold? It was a very unbusinesslike system. He thought they should take an average of $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per acre increase in the rental value of Crown lands by a railway going through them, and if they took that average for 40 miles back there would be an increased rental value of £100 or £50 on each side of the railway for every mile of railway constructed. Was it not reasonable that the increased value, instead of being put into the Lands Department and into the consolidated revenue, and being used for relieving the cities of taxation, should be paid into the Railway Department to assist in reducing railway rates and fares, and in enabling the department to pay their way?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What would you give to the Railway Department for enhancing the value of private freehold land?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That was another question altogether. They had to pay the amount of the increased value in land tax. The railway increased the value of land, but the shire councils took good care that the values were put up. The consequence was that they had to pay the increase in extra land tax. There was another injustice: the landowner paid the taxes, and they went into the revenue to relieve the towns and cities of taxation, instead of being used for the relief of the country districts. It was a wonder that they had not risen up in civil war. (Government laughter.) The revenue collected in that way was used to relieve the towns and cities, and even the school

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teacher, when he qualified, was sent in to the city. All the time the Government were taking the revenue which the country supplied for the benefit of the towns, and they were impoverishing the country.

Mr. MURPHY: Does not the school teacher apply to the department to be sent into the city?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The school teacher got the best salary and the most privileges he could, like the rest of them, but that was no reason why the whole of those privileges should be kept for the men in the cities. Let them have a little fair play and give some encouragement to the men who had to live in the country. The Lands Department was taking nearly £1,000,000 every year from the country and giving it to the cities.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: His contention was that those moneys should go to relieve the railways. The railways had not had fair play, and neither had the people who used them. They had to pay extortionate freights simply because the money obtained through the railways was used for other purposes. The roll of honour in the Commissioner's report reflected great credit on the Railway Department. He supposed some of the Trades Hall people would call the men who had gone to the front fools, the same as they did a great many more. That roll of honour was a credit to the Railway Department, and was a credit to the men in the railway service. Had they gone to the front at the request of the unions or at the request of the Trades Hall?

Mr. COLLINS: Nearly all unionists.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would the hon. member say that the Trades Hall had ever used one argument in favour of those men going?

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would he say that they had given one word of encouragement to induce them to go? He dare not rise in his seat and say that the Trades Hall had ever given them one bit of encouragement to go to the front. If there was one department that deserved a vote of censure, not upon the men, but upon the administration of the department, it was the Railway Department. The railway regulations provided fines and penalties for any interference with the railway servants, and what did they find? Was there any prosecution of the man who stopped the railways? Was there any prosecution of the man who rode on the railways and interfered with the railway servants: who made them put the luggage down and stopped them from assisting travellers at the various stations, including ladies with two or three children, and some of them sick at that? They were compelled to carry their own luggage along the platform, as the porters were not allowed to touch that luggage. It was a shame and a crime that stood against the administration of the Railway Department. He admitted that that man travelled on a pass, and he hoped he paid for it. Would the Minister say that he paid for it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course he paid for it. I answered that question before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He had not heard it, but he accepted the Minister's word that he had paid for it, but a good many people

had their doubts about it. That man travelled up and down the railways on a pass, interfered with railway servants, prevented them from doing their duty, and yet all the regulations of the Railway Department were passed over and not a single word was said to him. The loyal industrious men in the railway service dared not do their duty. They had to send telegrams to the Commissioner excusing themselves for doing their duty and excusing themselves for helping women and children on the railway. Did they ever hear of such a state of things? Would the Minister deny that certain men on the railways sent telegrams to the Commissioner telling him that they had done their duty and asking if they had done right? He knew that those telegrams were sent to Brisbane, but whether they went to the Commissioner or to some other public servant he did not know. The Traffic Manager knew all about it. Then, again, they had the Northern railways held up for three weeks by men who were earning big money and who got everything they wanted through the Arbitration Court. Yet they threw down their tools, stopped the railways, and stopped the producers from getting their produce to market, and then the Government actually considered whether they would submit to arbitration the question of whether they should be paid for such a thing or not. Did they ever hear of such a state of things? The producers had 40,000 cases of produce perishing on the wharves through the action of those men, and yet they had a Government that weak that they said to the men, "We will consider whether you shall be paid for ruining the people." Then they talked about victimisation. He was in a room where there was a meeting called, and one of the men declared, "Yes, it is all right; the Northern men have gone back, and there is no victimisation." Were the men who lost that 40,000 cases of fruit and vegetables victimised? The carriage on the railways was 40,000 cases short on account of their action.

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

Mr. BEBBINGTON (continuing): The Minister stated that "we stopped the strike." What did they do? The Minister absolutely aided and abetted the strikers on the Southern railways. Would he deny that when the railway men refused to handle the goods, and when two or three railway porters were allowed to hold up the Southern railways, that he issued a proclamation preventing the farmers and producers from supplying the railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes, I deny it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Would the Minister accept perishable goods at that time for Wallangarra? The Minister knew very well that he issued that proclamation, and he knew perfectly well that that proclamation aided and abetted the strikers. He knew perfectly well that he had taken the management of the railways and everything else out of the Commissioner's hands. The hon. gentleman even sent word to have the produce taken out of the trucks, and yet he came here and denied it. When men who controlled the great highways of trade took the management out of the hands of a Commissioner could they expect anything else but deficits? What kind of management had they got?

He was sorry that his time had expired, as he would like to have had another hour to discuss those matters.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The discussion so far on the part of hon. members opposite was nothing else but abuse of the working man. The railway employee was criticised from time to time by hon. members opposite. He was one of those who never hesitated to criticise persons holding high positions; it mattered not whether they sat on the bench or whether it was the Commissioner for Railways. He was not looking for any favours either from the judges or from the Commissioners. He was there to do what he considered his duty, and he intended to do it so long as he was a member of that House. They had a Commissioner who received a salary of £2,250 a year. He had not heard hon. members opposite criticising that gentleman. The Commissioner was only one of many highly paid officials in the railway service. In the far North they had a Deputy Commissioner who received £1,500 a year, and when he turned to the Commissioner's report he found only two pages from the Deputy Commissioner in the North dealing with the whole of the Northern railway system—the best-paying system they had got in the State. He was not going to find fault, either with the Deputy Commissioner or with the Commissioner, because the railways had not paid. He believed the railways should be considered as highways for the development of the country. When he looked over the returns in connection with the various railways, especially railways running into agricultural centres, he found that there was a loss on most of them, both on the Darling Downs and elsewhere in Queensland, and even in his own electorate. But he was not ashamed of the fact that the railways did not pay. They could not carry the farmers' produce cheaply to the market if they were going to charge high freights. Any man, even without any business capacity, could make the railways pay if he were to adopt schoolboy methods and increased fares and freights and reduced wages. He looked forward to the day when the great Western plains would not be feeding sheep. No matter what might be said about the Western plains not being able to grow wheat, the time was coming when those ideas would be thrown aside, and if they were going to compete in a world's market they must have cheap freights to bring their products to the various ports, and, therefore, they should not look on their railways altogether from a paying standpoint. They should look at them from the developmental standpoint. He

was one of those who believed [4 p.m.] that the railways having increased the unimproved value of their land right throughout the State, that unimproved value to a large extent should belong to the railways, as it were. The hon. member for Drayton had talked about the cities and towns, and immediately after he delivered his speech he bolted outside the House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: To wash his mouth out.

Mr. COLLINS: The point was that the cities contained the large unimproved values, and it was they who should have to contribute towards the development of the outside places where they were building railways. Surely, nobody expected railways into new centres to pay. He did not, and he was

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not one of those who had complained because the railways had not paid, believing that the land tax should be used towards assisting the man on the land. He believed that when they got the return moved for by Mr. Jones they would find that a large proportion of the land tax was paid by the cities and towns, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Drayton might say, and that a very small proportion was paid by the country.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. COLLINS: He was trying to connect his remarks on the land tax with the railways. The railways having increased the value of land, he was suggesting that it should be recognised that the land tax should go to make up the deficiency in their railways, to enable them to compete with the rest of the world, and to enable the farmers to get their produce to market at a cheap rate. He noticed that the Commissioner made certain recommendations about efficiency. He stood for efficiency, not only in connection with their railways, but in connection with other things, believing that if they were going to be successful in State enterprises they must have efficiency. They must try to teach people that the old doctrine that had come down throughout the ages that everyone must rob the Government was entirely wrong. The reason it existed in some quarters was the fact that they had had tyrannical Governments from time immemorial, and it was considered right for the people to rob the Government, not realising that they were the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: If this is the people's Government, what harm is there in the people robbing them?

Mr. COLLINS: That was not what he was trying to prove at all. They might as well ask the hon. member for Burke what Tom Carlyle meant when he said "a fair day's work, a fair day's pay," and so on. Milton got £10 for writing his "Paradise Lost," which was not fair pay. With regard to the Commissioner's recommendations, he would like to say that the men who got these big salaries must do their share of the work too. They must be held responsible as well as the men on 8s. or 9s. or 10s. a day. He was one of those who believed that they were overpaid, and he knew that many of his colleagues believed the same. He did not think that one man should get £100 and another £2,250. At any rate they did not appear to him to display that amount of intelligence which they ought in proportion to the salary—that was, twenty-two times as much, and he was satisfied that no man had twenty-two times the brain power of another man. He might think he had, but he was convinced it was not possible.

Mr. FORSYTH: Then you would reduce the salary to £250?

Mr. COLLINS: They did not appoint him. The hon. member belonged to a party which increased his salary by £250.

Mr. FORSYTH: How much do you think he is entitled to?

Mr. COLLINS: He was not going to answer that question offhand. The hon. member wanted to tie him up, so that he could go on the public platform and say he had said it, just as he had heard him say

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that Mr. Fisher said no man was worth £500 a year—which he did not believe he did say, and he had known him longer than most hon. members on the other side. He would not be a representative of the working classes if he listened to members on the other side talking about the highly paid railway employees if he did not point out that no reference was made to the really high-paid men. They expected, when they paid a man £2,250, that he would have some initiative. He had looked through the report carefully, and had not seen much evidence of it.

Mr. MURPHY: Is the Commissioner permitted to have any initiative?

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member knew that he could have initiative in that House if he wished, and he supposed that the Commissioner, considering that he was working under a particular Act of Parliament, could also show initiative. He could make suggestions the same as anybody else.

Mr. MURPHY: He initiated an economy board. Where is it now?

Mr. COLLINS: Yes, like putting up the hon. member for Burke to inquire into the position of the hon. member for Burke, putting the higher paid officials to inquire into the higher paid officials.

Mr. FORSYTH (*Murrumba*): The hon. member for Bowen, in his usual style, did not deal with the actual facts of the case in discussing the Commissioner. If he understood business, which he did not—

Mr. COLLINS: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in saying that I do not understand business? It is an instance of the continual "throwing off" on that side.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. FORSYTH: The Commissioner for Railways ought to be the very best man they could get. He did not think £2,250 was too big a salary for a man who represented and controlled a capital of £40,000,000. Any quantity of men in Queensland and throughout Australia administered infinitely less than that and got a great deal more. The matter of a few hundreds a year was a mere bagatelle in comparison with the initiative and administration of the railways. The Minister the other night was very frank and told them all about the terrible losses that were being made. He said that the estimated loss this year was £1,053,000. On a previous occasion he had given the figures at £1,006,000, taking the previous year's interest bill and, therefore, his estimate was conservative. He told them that there was an extra cost of £70,000 in connection with stores, so much extra in connection with coal and interest, but although the hon. member told them how the losses had been made he did not give them one solitary word to show how there was likely to be any reduction. He simply stated that they worked under abnormal conditions, which is quite true, and that in the sweet by and by he hoped the Railway Department would pay its way. What was the Government doing? It was absolutely impotent, paralytic. The hon. member said that the interest bill was £200,000 more than a year ago. Anybody who would look up the reports would see that every year

when they were building railways out of loan money the interest bill must increase. Last year there was a difference of about £80,000, but was that any reason why they should have a deficit of £1,053,000? The Commissioner asked a few questions in his report which were most pertinent. He did not profess to know, and it was impossible for anybody to know how to answer them perhaps. The only thing they could go on in criticising the department was the Commissioner's report, because the items were given in globo, hundreds of thousands of pounds—that was, apart from the report of the Auditor-General.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Does he contradict my figures?

Mr. FORSYTH: No. His complaint about the hon. member was that he had told them exactly what the loss was, but not how he was going to bring down the terrific difference between revenue and expenditure, which was a disgrace to any Government. Never in the history of Queensland had there been such a loss.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And never in the history of Queensland has the world been going through such terrible times.

Mr. FORSYTH: They had heard about losses some years ago when there was a terrible drought and when the revenue was reduced by £500,000 a year for two years.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you want us to resort to the same methods?

Mr. FORSYTH: What were they?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The poll tax, the denial of classification increases.

Mr. FORSYTH: Had a poll tax not been in existence for the last ten years? He was quite prepared to discuss that question at the proper time, but the present time was not the proper time. The Commissioner said in his report that he had always been a believer in the employees being paid a fair wage, and deprecated the payment of low wages to good men. He continued—

“In matters relating to employment, I contend that the State should set an example as the model employer; at the same time State employees should prove by interest and energy in their work that State enterprise is the success they claim it to be. It is understood that the unions consider it their duty to see that a man gets what he earns. I maintain therefore that it is the duty also of the unions to see that a man earns what he gets. There should be sincerity on the part of the unions in this respect.”

Now, although he does not say so, you could only arrive at one conclusion from that statement, and that is that there was not sincerity on the part of the unionists; because if there were, why would he put that in? Then, on page 30, he asks this particular question—

“Are we getting value for payments made by the department to its servants?”

Would Mr. Evans, or any sensible man, ask that question if he were satisfied that he was getting full value?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course he would; he might have said “Yes” immediately.

Mr. FORSYTH: What was the occasion for putting the statement in? As a matter

of fact there was only one conclusion to be drawn from that remark—that there were some men who were not giving full value. He didn't mean to say that a large number of the men were not hardworking, honest men; but it was quite evident from this statement that the Commissioner was not satisfied. The hon. gentleman told them nothing about that. He did not accept the recommendation. The Commissioner went on to talk about the work being given out in co-operative groups, and referred to payment by results. That was contract labour.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you say that that is contract labour?

Mr. FORSYTH: What did he call it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I don't call it contract labour.

Mr. FORSYTH: What did he mean by “payment by results”? Contract labour was payment by results.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You don't understand what you are saying if you say that payment of groups is contract labour.

Mr. FORSYTH: The Commissioner also said—

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

So it was quite evident, according to Mr. Evans's statement, that they had political influence, and that that was the influence which was ruining the department. No one had any objection to paying men good wages; but the whole management and administration of the department should be under the control of the Government, instead of being domineered by the unions. The Commissioner said further that they should—

“make the men their own masters, except, of course, so far as the supervision by the department of the co-operative work is concerned; and I trust some of the staff will decide on trying it.”

Why did not the Minister endeavour to do that class of work and see what a man could do?

Mr. COLLINS: The card system.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Do you recommend that system?

Mr. FORSYTH: They could arrive at some decision with regard to what was a fair thing for a day's work, and the men who were able to do more than that would make more money by it. The Commissioner said it would be the means of obtaining better results in connection with the department. Those were things which were worth looking into.

Then they came to the Auditor-General's report. What did he say?—

“The question of appointing as a colleague to the Commissioner some person with approved business and financial qualifications is, I think, worthy of serious consideration.”

Had the hon. gentleman given the House any idea of that? It was something which he (Mr. Forsyth) had argued for and tried to persuade the Government into doing ever since they had come into power—to appoint someone else, not only with approved business and financial qualifications, but one who would be a thorough expert and would

Mr. Forsyth.]

understand the details in connection with the department. They should let that man be independent, for the purpose of giving ideas which would be the means of making the service far more efficient and at the same time also try to economise.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did not you tender that advice before this Government came in?

Mr. FORSYTH: The Secretary for Railways had asked him a question, and he would answer it in one go. It was for the simple reason that the railways were paying. A business man, when he found that his business was going back and losing money, went through all his various departments to find out if there was any leakage and where he could economise. That was what the hon. gentleman was asked to do in respect to the Railway Department. By doing that it would be of enormous benefit to the department. They should get a thoroughly qualified business man with financial qualifications who would be independent of unionism, independent even of the Government; who would be able to give his opinion straight out and not be afraid that he would be discharged because of the likings of the Minister or anybody else; who believed that what he gave out as his opinion would be the right thing in connection with that matter. Those were facts which the hon. gentleman could not deny. Coming again to the Commissioner's report, it was stated that the men's claims in connection with the last increase amounted to £750,000. That was what the men expected to get, and what they asked for. If they were going to go on at that rate, what was going to result? The hon. gentleman must know what the result would be. The Minister had told them another remarkable thing when he stated that there had been an increase of £200,000 in the interest bill over that of 1914-5, while the extra mileage of railways was only 376. He also referred to another £200,000 that the railways were losing in connection with the rescinding of the old Guarantee Act of 1906. Who had introduced that Act? He did not know whether the hon. gentleman was in the House at that particular time. If he was, he voted for it; and every single member of the Labour party who supported Kidston and Morgan at that time voted for it; and every single member on the Opposition side voted against it and did his level best not to have that Act passed. It was quite true, as the Minister had stated the other night, that a great many of the lines should not have been built, and very likely it would have been a good thing if they had not been built. That Bill was introduced by the Labour party because they were the dominant party; it was introduced by them and passed by them, and if any blame was to be attached the Labour party was to blame. He remembered the last year the Liberal party was in power when someone proposed the repeal of the Act. He could see difficulties in connection with financing the affairs of the department consequent on the war, and he did not approve of it. He could see there was going to be a great loss. But apart from the Guarantee Act, or any other Act, the Government went on piling up expenditure, and there was no buoyancy with regard to the revenue. What did the Treasurer say? He said distinctly there was no buoyancy; there was not that buoyancy which

they should have in connection with the Railway Department. Whether there was no buoyancy in connection with the revenue, there certainly was a buoyancy in connection with the expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Tell us what portion of that expenditure you would cut out?

Mr. FORSYTH: It was not his business to tell the Minister that. Had he the whole of the figures at his disposal and the whole of the staff of the Railway Department to help him to find out how he could do it? He (Mr. Forsyth) was only going by the report of the Commissioner and the statements of the hon. gentleman, and it was quite evident to him that both those men were dissatisfied with some of the things that had happened in the Railway Department. The Government was simply sitting back and doing nothing. The Minister did not say what he was going to do. He told them all about the loss which was going to occur. Whatever they might say and whatever they might do, the one thing evident was that there would be increases in connection with the Railway Department for many years. Prior to 1915, every year there were increases, not alone in the Railway Department but in all departments. But, while they had a very big increase—amounting to hundreds of thousands of pounds—yet, on the other hand, their revenue was buoyant and they were able to cover that increase.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Conditions were very different then.

Mr. FORSYTH: Of course they were; because they had not then the terrifying taxation which they had now and which was retarding development. Where was development taking place? Where were the secondary industries springing up which they hoped to see? A State iron and steel works was going to be started. All that meant wealth production and it meant the employment of a large amount of labour. Instead of the Government giving any assistance whatever to the general body of the people, so as to give them any incentive or encouragement to go on the land and develop the State, all their legislation practically had been in the direction of retarding progress. The Treasurer said they would have to sink deeper and try and find what was the reason. He did not give any reason. Did the hon. gentleman in charge of that huge department give any reason why they should try and bring their revenue and expenditure nearer together? He agreed with what had been said by the hon. member for Bowen, but he was sure that that member must recognise that if they were going to have a loss of £1,050,000 this year, with one of £740,000 last year, and another of £500,000 the year before, something would have to be done to try and improve the position. If that is going to continue, what would be the result? The Government had not shown the slightest sign of any effort to try and reduce it. They certainly were running slower trains, having a less number of trains and all that sort of thing, but what they wanted was someone thoroughly qualified to go into the whole business and find out what was the best thing to do so as to bring that huge department—a department of which they had always been proud—into some better financial position than it was at the present time. He trusted that the Go-

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vernment would accept the advice of the Auditor-General and appoint someone. By doing that they might solve the problem in some way or other. He did not anticipate that they would be able to square accounts. Most assuredly, he said if any business man, or business firm, with a capital of £40,000,000 on which to work could not make some economies when they were losing so much, they would not deserve the name of business men.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why does not the Commissioner do it?

Mr. FORSYTH: As a matter of fact, the whole business had been taken out of the hands of the Commissioner. The wages had been fixed by the Arbitration Court, and he had to carry out the policy of the Government, which might not be the same as his own. He did not mind increases of wages being granted, but if they were going to have increases they should at the same time try to economise in some way or other so that taxation should be relieved in a measure in connection with that great department. Never in the history of Queensland had the Railway Department been in such a terrible mess as it was at the present time. Never had there been such a terrible loss in that department; and each year as they went on with the Labour party in power it was getting worse—at any rate, there was no sign of its getting better. There was one thing to which he wanted to refer before he sat down. They knew that stores were going to increase in connection with the war, and it would have been a good thing to have looked ahead in regard to matters of that sort and to have spent money in getting out stores which, in the early stages, they could have got out at a much lower price than they were paying now. They would thus have saved the Government and the department thousands of pounds. He advised the

Minister to give his attention, [4.30 p.m.] with the aid of the Commissioner and his officers, to the question of seeing whether they could not in some way or another reduce the loss to a much more reasonable figure than it was. If they did that it would be a very good thing for the Railway Department.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): He had listened to a good deal of criticism at different times from the hon. member for Murrumba, and particularly on this vote, but he had never yet heard the hon. member offer any constructive or definite proposal. (Hear, hear!) If the hon. gentleman had sufficient ability to criticise adversely the administration of this Government in connection with the Railway Department, he ought to be able to show where, in his opinion, they had departed from sound financial management, but the hon. member simply indulged in veiled slander against one of the finest bodies of workers in the State of Queensland.

Mr. FORSYTH: I have not said one single word against them.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It was a veiled reference, but it was there all the time. In commenting on the Commissioner's report, page 30, as regards the operation of unionism in the Railway Department, the hon. member said—he had taken the hon. member's words down—that the only conclusion that could be come to was that there was not sincerity of service on the part of the Railway Commissioner's employees.

Then the hon. member went on to refer to the butt-gang system. What did that system fine itself down to in operation when all was said and done? It was a bad system, which had been abolished in many of the older countries. It simply meant the forming of workers into groups, pitting men, with particularly high qualifications in the trade they were in and of great physical stamina and endurance, to race against gangs of weaker men. Boiled down, it meant the survival of the fittest and the elimination of the weakest altogether.

Mr. FORSYTH: That is not the opinion of the Commissioner, anyhow.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: He did not think much of the Commissioner's ability to give an opinion on that question, because the past administration of the railways went to prove that the railway workers were a very secondary—may, the last—consideration in the Commissioner's mind when considering the management of the railways. The thing was to make them pay at any price. No matter how small a wage was paid to the railway employees, the consideration was to get a return on the expenditure incurred in connection with the railways.

The hon. member for Murrumba also practically inferred that there was political interference with the Commissioner.

Mr. FORSYTH: I did not say so—I quoted his speech.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The hon. member practically endorsed it. He recommended, in line with the Auditor-General's recommendation, the appointment of another Commissioner, thus piling highly paid officials on the top of other highly paid officials, and making a bigger load all the time. The trouble with the railways was that there was not enough Government control of the Railway Commissioner, and he hoped that at some future time the Railway Act would be amended so as to make the Railway Commissioner absolutely amenable to the Government, who were responsible to the people for the running of the railways, and who should be able to put their system into operation in order to make the railways pay. If they did not make the railways pay—not that that was the biggest consideration—they should legitimately have to answer for it. The hon. member for Murrumba carefully kept away from the consideration of some of the causes that went to bring about a loss on the railways at the present time. Anyone who read through the Commissioner's report, and compared the revenue with the revenue in previous years, would see that it was absolutely impossible to make any charge with any body of truth in it at all that the railway employees were responsible, because there had been a bigger revenue earned than in any previous year. There had been a big increase in the North and Centre, and a decrease in the South; but on the whole there had been an increase in the railway revenue this year as compared with last year. If there was any slackening off or any attempt to shirk their work by the railway employees, it would be immediately shown in the revenue-earning capabilities of the railway. When they had an increase they could not legitimately say there had been any falling-off on account of insincerity of service by the workers. He wanted to call attention to the fact that when this Government came into power they

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gave an increase to the railway servants, amongst others, that had been denied to them previously. They gave them an 8½ increase on the then classification rates of pay. That contributed to an increased cost in the wages-sheet of the Railway Department to the extent of £132,000. In addition to that, there was the McCawley award, which gave an increased cost of £445,000. Just before this Government came into power the late Government, in the last month of their regime—or rather in the few weeks while they held office pending the selection of the Cabinet—they gave payment of overtime rates at time and a-quarter and time and a-half. They had had an opportunity for three years previously to do that, but had not done it; and only just as this Government came into power they gave them that concession. The hon. member for Burrum was Minister for Railways at the time. That concession caused an increased cost against the railway revenue of £47,000, making a total of £624,000. Hon. members opposite said that the increased rates should not be paid to railway employees, and that they were not entitled to it; but it was due to an award of the Arbitration Court, which increased the railway rates over and above what this Government had previously increased them. He maintained that men who were doing such a service in a State enterprise were entitled to the increases given.

There was another increase which the hon. member for Murrumba forgot to mention—that was the increased cost of coal. In accordance with a motion by the Chairman, a return was laid on the table of the House showing the increased prices which had to be paid for commodities. There was a general average increase in the price of coal last year of 4s. a ton on 387 517 tons of coal, which caused an increased cost of £77,500. In addition to that, hon. members would see from the Commissioner's report that there was £25,000 extra payable in wages on account of flood damage in the various divisions of the State. There was also another £28,000 extra which had to be paid on account of repairs which were taken on in the railway workshops through the shortness of material caused by the war. They had to take on those repairs on account of being unable to get material, and they had to get on as best they could through the war shortening their supplies. The total extra cost was £754,000.

There was another thing which would show the tremendous increase in the price of material, and which had increased the cost of running the railways. On page 9 of the report a list of items was given, and he would just mention one or two. Carbide in 1914-15 was £14 per ton, but in 1916-17 it was £58 per ton. Steel rails in 1914-15 were £7 10s. per ton, and in 1916-17 were £22 per ton. Iron was £11 6s. 8d. per ton in 1914-15, and now it was £26 a ton. Steel plates were £9 9s. 8d. a ton in 1914-15, and last year they were £36 a ton. Flat spring steel was £13 a ton in 1914-15 and last year £48 per ton. The increase ran in some cases to 100 per cent. and up to 300 per cent., and then all the increases on materials that should have been mentioned had not been referred to by the Commissioner. It was a slander against the workers to charge them with the extra cost in the face of those increases.

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There was another matter which he wished to refer to, as mentioned on page 6 of the report, which showed that the loss on the railways had been occasioned through the loss on most of the Southern lines, practically the agricultural lines of the State. The paragraph read—

“In connection with the deficit on the year's working of £734,997, I desire to state that the total loss on those sections of railway that did not pay interest and working expenses during the calendar year of 1916 amounted to £765,332. Of these, thirty-seven sections failed to earn sufficient revenue to pay working expenses and interest on capital, and thirty-three other sections, while paying working expenses, failed to pay full interest.

“It will, therefore, be seen that the lines which did not pay resulted in the loss of a greater sum than the deficit shown in working the railways last financial year.”

There was the explanation of where the loss on the railways was coming from. It was because a number of political lines were constructed, and they did not pay working expenses. Some paid a percentage of working expenses, but did not pay interest and redemption.

Mr. MOORE: You want to add to that loss by the Cannindah line, which will only pay ½ per cent.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That was a very interesting interjection. The hon. member for Mount Morgan, when speaking the other night, showed that mining railways paid the highest rates per cent., over and above working expenses and interest and redemption. That could be seen when they compared the revenue earned in the North with the revenue earned in the South. The North and Central divisions increased their revenue last year to the extent of £116,051, while in the South the revenue decreased by £28,776. The increase in expenditure on the railways in the North and Centre combined was not equal to the increased expenditure in the Southern Division. The expenditure in the North and Centre was £110,235 and in the South it was £139,941, or £29,700 more than the Centre and North put together, and yet those systems in the North and Centre were paying the biggest return on the Queensland railways. These were some of the lines that were not paying full working expenses:—

“The following sections paid working expenses but did not return full interest on capital:—

“Southern Division.—Toowoomba to Wallangarra, £3 7s. 5d. per cent.; Toowoomba to Cunnamulla, 19s. 4d. per cent.; Westgate to Cheeple, £1 8s. 1d. per cent.; Warwick to Dirranbandi, £1 7s. 11d. per cent.; South Brisbane to Southport, 10s. 2d. per cent.; Ernest Junction to Tweed Heads, £1 19s. 1d. per cent.; Park Road to Manly, £1 4s. 11d. per cent.; Brisbane to Sandgate, £2 18s. 2d. per cent.; Caboolture to Kilcoy, 16s. 2d. per cent.; Gympie to Maryborough, £1 6s. 8d. per cent.; Theebine to Nanango, 5s. 4d. per cent.; Mungar Junction to Mundubbera, 8s. 2d. per cent.; Croydon Junction to Bundaberg, £2 10s. per cent.; North Bundaberg to Mount Perry, 4s. 3d. per cent.; Bundaberg to Yandaran, £1 2s. 11d. per cent.

"The following sections paid neither working expenses nor interest on capital:—

"Wyrcema to Millmerran, Warwick to Maryvale, Killarney Junction to Killarney, Pengarry Junction to Crow's Nest, Oakley to Evanslea, Dalby to Tara, Dalby to Bell, Bethania Junction to Beaudesert, Manly to Cleveland, Isis Junction to Dallarnil."

The Commissioner for Railways said the loss on those lines was greater than the deficit for last year, and that is what they had to face when they came to consider how they were going to make the railways pay. That was the crux of the question; not how they were going to sweat the railway employees to pay for political lines that past Governments built for their political friends. In the past previous Administrations sweated the workers to pay for the loss. It was put pretty plainly in the report for this year. The loss on those lines was greater than the deficit, and the question was to make those lines pay. There were several ways in which those difficulties could be met, first by getting the land more into use along them with a land tax which will make the land-grabbers sell the land instead of running a few head of cattle on it. Another way was the way the Commissioner and the Railway Department had already entered on, and if they spent £36,000 or £40,000 in experiments, even without result, they would be justified, but the results so far justified the construction of a light motor service the same as they had on the Cooktown line and on another in the south-west, light motor locomotives and light wagons that would run at a reduced cost against the big heavy engines they had now. Another thing he would suggest to the Commissioner and the Minister was that they encourage the whole of the rank and file to offer suggestions for the improvement of the rolling-stock.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have that now.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: He was glad to hear it, but he did not know it was in operation. It should be made more widely known. Where an employee was prepared to come forward and offer a suggestion for the improvement of anything in the way of rolling-stock, anything on the engines that would reduce the cost in the expenditure on coal, oil, or tallow, or anything used in the running of the engines, they should understand that for a tangible, well-considered suggestion he should get a reward, and if it was adopted, he should get a permanent reward in the return gained by the information.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not only do we do that, but we assist them with money to work out their designs.

Colonel RANKIN (*Burrum*): He thought it would be extremely difficult to conceive of anything weaker than the speech delivered by the Minister for Railways in moving the vote—the Minister of a most important department, dealing with a public utility which represents something like £40,000,000 of our national debt, a department which, owing to the maladministration of the present Government, had burdened the State financially in a way that had never before been experienced. They on that side of the House looked for an explanation to be made by

the Minister as to how he was going to redeem the position. What did they find? They found in the speech of the Minister a certain amount of explanation of the figures contained in the Commissioner's report. The balance of the speech was more or less made up of criticising the previous Government. Not one single syllable, not one single idea, had been disclosed by the Minister as to how he was going to improve the position. After all, that was what they were anxious about. They were not concerned with past history, but they were closely concerned with the future history of the Railway Department and the administration of the department. One speaker—he thought it was the hon. member for Bowen—said the Government stood for efficiency. In his opinion, the Government stood for deficiency; deficits in every department had been characteristic of the present Administration. The railways were their most valuable asset, an asset which, up to the advent of the present Government, had been not only able to pay its way, but to contribute from time to time something to the revenue, but in the hands of the present Government it had practically gone from bad to worse, until now the Minister came forward and gave them an assurance that if they passed his Estimates he would have a deficit of £1,050,000 next year. Was there anything in the speech of the hon. member as to how he was going to meet the position? There was not a single sentence in his speech, nor in the speech of any supporter on that side, to show how the deficiency was to be made good. Were they to continue going from bad to worse? Was the present attitude of the Government towards that department, the attitude which had been shown by them ever since they came into power, to continue? There was nothing to indicate that any change was to be made. The Minister had not even given them any reasonable excuse for this tremendous deficit. Practically the whole text of his reasoning seemed to be that it was owing to the increased cost of material through the war, owing to the decrease in shipping, and owing to industrial trouble, and so on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did I not tell you anything about the cost of fuel?

Colonel RANKIN: Was that not material? He said that the Minister referred to the increased cost of material, and those were the only tangible things he put his finger on. He would read the difference in the figures in regard to those commodities. In 1914, the expenditure on coal was £195,000; in 1917, it had increased to £244,000, a difference of, roughly, £49,000. Water in 1914 cost £33,000, and in 1917 it increased to £39,000, an increase of £6,000. Oil cost in 1914 £13,000, and in 1917 £24,000. The difference in the expenditure on those items, the only items specified in the Commissioner's report, or in the speech of the hon. the Minister, amounted only to £66,000.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Now look at the difference in the prices, on page 9 of the report.

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister could not ask them to accept that as an explanation for converting a payable concern into a non-payable concern.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When was it a payable concern?

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Colonel RANKIN: It was a payable concern up to the end of the Liberal Administration. He would quote from the Auditor-General's report certain figures he used in the debate on the Financial Statement. They would bear repetition, because they absolutely refuted the statements of hon. members opposite as an explanation of the reasons of the deficiency. They found, for instance, that the return on capital invested in 1912-13 was £3 8s. 8d. In 1913-14 it was £3 12s. 2d., and in 1914-15 £3 16s. 7d., but in 1915-16—the first year of the Labour Administration—it dropped to £2 11s.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the drought?

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister now tried to change his ground, and put it down to the drought. The effect of the drought would be to reduce the earning power, but instead of that, they had last year the highest revenue in the history of the Queensland railways. Did that look like a drought?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is not so. It is not the largest revenue. It is the largest revenue with a far larger expenditure, owing to the drought.

Colonel RANKIN: He would quote again from the Auditor-General's report. He said, "Notwithstanding that the earning of last year constituted a record, the return on the capital invested was only £2 1s. 5d. per cent." What was the meaning of that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That means that the Railway Department, in order to save the stock in the State, expended more money in order to earn that revenue.

Colonel RANKIN: What mattered it what object he had—whether he was running trains to carry starving stock or to carry sugar or coal—it actually meant that the traffic was there, and the fact remained that the earnings of the railways was there, and, notwithstanding what the Minister said to the contrary, he had during last year a record income from the railways, but still showed a loss of £700,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The expenses were greater.

Colonel RANKIN: The only expenses he had been able to place his finger on were those he had mentioned, and they accounted for about £66,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The increases to the staff accounted for £230,000.

Colonel RANKIN: The Minister asked them to accept that as a reason for the deficiency.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You do not know anything about it.

Colonel RANKIN: It was not a question of his knowing anything about it, but a question of what the hon. gentleman knew. He would read just what the Minister said—

"The reasons why that extra amount was required had been plainly set forth in the Commissioner's report of this year, and were flood damages, the increased cost of coal, and the increased cost of stores."

Was that not what he said? The hon. member's speech was made up practically of information of which they were already in possession. When they came to [5 p.m.] boil the thing down, they were not so very much concerned with what had passed, but with the future, and

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the State had the right to demand from the Minister what steps he proposed to take to make this public utility a paying concern, or, at all events, to make it pay its way and remove an enormous burden of taxation which it was responsible for placing on the shoulders of the people of Queensland. They had the assurance of the Minister that the railways were run on economic lines—

"The railways were going to produce wealth, and he had no doubt at all that by pursuing the course of economy that the Railway Department were pursuing, and had been pursuing for some time past, they would be able to square the ledger before very long, provided, of course, that the abnormal atmosphere in which they were living at the present time did not continue."

And later on he said—

"The Government were practising economy to-day in a scientific manner."

There was a touch of the Minister for Education about those words. The other night he told them that they were being taxed scientifically. He (Colonel Rankin) pointed out that they were killing the country scientifically. Now the Minister said that that was the perfect way of doing these things.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No, I did not say that.

Colonel RANKIN: Well, then, the more efficient way, which practically meant the same thing. He practically said that that way was by issuing Treasury notes.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I did not say that.

Colonel RANKIN: They had the assurance that they were being taxed scientifically, and now the Minister for Railways told them they were having an example of scientific economy. If that was scientific economy, then God preserve Queensland from it! They did not want that form of economy. They wanted economy that was characterised by soundness of administration; the economy of men who made 20s. before they spent 20s. The hon. member asked, "What would you do?" The first thing he would do would be to put a Government in power who had some business ability and knew how to run the country. That was what the people of Queensland ought to do. They would never get the railways run as they should be run until they had that, and the people of Queensland were beginning to see it; they were beginning to realise that any Government who had the cool effrontery to come in with Estimates and tell them that they could only promise that next year they would have a bigger deficit than the previous one, were not fit to remain in power.

If the Government would only adopt a policy that would popularise the railways instead of a policy of practically crippling traffic there might be some hope for them. He was going to give one illustration of how they acted to the contrary, and that was in his own electorate. They had a deep-water port at Urangan, which had been decryd by hon. members opposite practically ever since it had been mentioned in the House, although it had shown its usefulness and its capabilities. If it were possible to develop that port to its best advantage something might be done to increase the railway earnings in that district. Just recently, as most hon. members were aware,

there had been a tremendous congestion of sugar along the seaboard owing to shipping troubles. Urangan, owing to its having a deeper entrance than other ports in the immediate neighbourhood, had been selected as the port for shipping sugar from that district. A vessel of some 6,000 tons was promised by the Commonwealth Government and was at present loading there. One would have thought that this was an opportunity, not only to advertise the suitability of the port and the character of the whole district—not only to show to the outside world that here was a place where they could send a deep-water ship with perfect safety—but also of encouraging traffic on the railways. But, instead of giving a reasonable rate of freight, the Railway Department practically placed upon it a prohibitive rate.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You want to reduce rates?

Colonel RANKIN: He could quite understand that the Minister was not in favour of giving the farmer any reduction in freights. When it came to increasing the burden on the man on the land, the Minister for Railways, and his colleagues, were all there to squeeze every penny out of him. That was the very policy that was showing its effect in a diminished return and increased losses on our railways. The Railway Department imposed a freight on sugar from Cordalba to Urangan of 8s. 11d. per ton, plus 2s. 6d. per truck haulage, which ran out at something between 9s. and 10s. per ton. That was for a distance of 59 miles. That sugar could have been carried from Cordalba to Brisbane, a distance of 210 miles, for something in the neighbourhood of 14s. per ton.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your own Government did that.

Colonel RANKIN: Urangan as a port was not opened in the time of his Government. That was how the present Government were making their lines pay—by killing traffic! He supposed the same thing would apply also as to the supply of coal, which he had already mentioned in the House.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your Government established a special rate to Brisbane.

Colonel RANKIN: He was giving the relative prices. If the Government were anxious to develop our railways—and, after all, they were like any other live business, they must either develop, stagnate, or go back—they would encourage traffic. In the case of the present Government it had been neither stagnation nor development, but retrogression of the worst type.

There was one other matter to which he wished to refer. They all knew that the cost of commodities had gone up, coal amongst the number, but the Minister had been largely responsible for the increase in the cost of coal as far as the railways were concerned. They knew that, merely in order to penalise a certain electorate, they carried coal a distance of over 200 miles from Ipswich to the Maryborough district rather than pay the 3s. 6d. per ton difference in the price.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Than pay an exorbitant price to your people.

Colonel RANKIN: If that were one of their methods of scientific economy, then

might they say "From scientific economy, good Lord deliver us!" He had not the shadow of a doubt that that was typical of them. Was the Minister prepared to say that the difference in the conditions at the Burrum and Ipswich did not justify a difference of 3s. 6d. a ton?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, they did not.

Colonel RANKIN: Of course they did. They knew perfectly well that those matters had been subject to the control of the Federal Government under the War Precautions Act, and yet the Minister—who was as innocent of any knowledge of that particular matter as a child unborn—said that that 3s. 6d. per ton justified the Government in carrying coal from Ipswich to Maryborough. He challenged the Minister to prove his statement. He was prepared to show that it cost more to produce a ton of coal than at Ipswich, and he was willing to make any offer he liked in substantiation of his statement.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some of your people offered to give us some coal until the mills started—only making a convenience of the department.

Colonel RANKIN: Again the Minister was making a statement that was unfair.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I have it in black and white.

Colonel RANKIN: The incident to which he referred—and the Minister ought to know it—dated back to May of 1915. There was no talk of mills starting at that time. He could bring documentary evidence to show that the department declined to take coal which was offered to them without any conditions being attached to it, and the Minister knew it. Those were one or two reasons why they had financial chaos in the administration of the department, which, instead of being a millstone round the necks of the people, should be a paying concern—something to help in the development of their country and to assist in removing from the people the heavy burden of taxation which the present Government had, through their maladministration, seen fit to impose upon them.

Mr. WEIR (Maryborough): He did not intend to condemn the Commissioner for Railways. Had he so intended, all he need have done was to use some of the arguments used by the hon. member for Murrumba in his speech. They would recollect that the hon. member for Murrumba had quoted various questions which the Commissioner had asked in his report. He was just going to say, in passing, that the hon. member for Bowen had compared the earning power of the ordinary workers with those at the head of the Railway Department; not only that department, but all other departments. It occurred to his mind at the present time that the soldier—of whom they heard so much from hon. gentlemen opposite—was rated—according to their methods of rating—at twenty-two and a-half times less than the present Commissioner for Railways; that was about the comparative rating. That was only just a passing reference to show on what plane those people were prepared to put their own particular class, as compared with the working class generally. Now, if there was anything on which they could condemn the Commissioner, it was the questions which he had asked in his annual report, and the reference made in

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the Auditor-General's report to the necessity for the appointment of a financial expert. He had in his mind that at the present time there was attached to the Commissioner's staff a branch of financial experts, in the Chief Accountant's branch. They learnt at this late hour that that staff did not contain a financial expert. Certainly, to say the least of it, that reflected on somebody. He was not going to say that the Chief Accountant's branch was such a dismal failure; but he was going to say that if they looked back into ancient history they found out the necessity for all this resurrection of the Railway Department in so far as the management was concerned, and which had not developed during the years the Labour Government had been in power. He had in his mind some glaring instances that had occurred during the time hon. gentlemen opposite had been in power, which showed—to him at least—that something should have been done then to effectively handle the Railway Department. Who had forgotten the purchase of the McKeen cars? He remembered well, in Ipswich, when there was an ants-nest track beaten from the top office to the shop to watch the working of the McKeen cars. The hon. member for Burrum would remember it. If he understood right, it was during the period he was Minister for Railways, or shortly before that. At all events, he was one of those who stood amongst the men and heard the mechanics condemn the McKeen cars, as there was so little chance of their being a success. Yet the mechanical experts on the top of the hill passed them. And it was generally accepted that it was the late Commissioner—Mr. Thallon—who was responsible for passing them. He thought, in fairness to Mr. Thallon, it should be said—and he was going to say it so that he would be challenged if it were not correct—that the contract for those cars was not accepted until after Mr. Thallon died. If that was so, somebody else must have been responsible for the McKeen cars. The only alteration made in the design of the McKeen cars was made by Mr. Chas. Pemberton, present Deputy Commissioner in Rockhampton. He suggested some slight trivial alteration so that they could run effectively. Where had they run to? They had run on to the scrapheap in less than three years. Those were the sort of things that ought to have been inquired into, because of the money that had been spent on them. Was that the only one? Did the hon. member for Carnarvon or the members for various districts in that locality forget the incident in connection with the Renard road train? Where had it gone? It had run into a rut out Inglewood way, or had been placed under tarpaulins in one of the sheds with a notice put up, "Don't look under here or you will see something which was left to us by a Liberal Government." (Laughter.) They did not inquire into these things, but just touch the question of increasing the workers' wages, and they were hauled up for inquiry straight away. Did they forget the smash they had at the bottom of the Range? Did they forget the other one they had at Redbank and in dozens of places in various localities? What special action had been taken in those cases? He was not going to say that any special action should have been taken. He was not one of those who believed that because a man had an accident in railroad work he should be at all times hounded down by any party, or any Government.

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But if those mistakes had occurred under this Government it would not have been taken quietly. They would have heard such a row from the other side that he ventured to say would have been heard out in the middle of the road. He was not going to say that the fact of those things occurring should have caused an inquiry in those days; but they should not wait until 1915, until the Labour Government came along, and then raise a howl when they tried to increase the earning power of the bottom dog. There were various other things which would bear criticism. In years gone by there was a system—there was now—of building carriages under the supervision directly of the Chief Mechanical Engineer and indirectly of the Commissioner. In 1902 he found they had a special class of suburban car built. If he remembered rightly, Mr. Nutt was the Chief Mechanical Engineer at that time. In his report for 1902 he stated—

"A new style of carriage is now being introduced for suburban traffic—the same as New South Wales has had running to and from Sydney for many years. It will be greatly appreciated by the travelling public, and will be found more elastic for holiday traffic than the side-door carriage hitherto in use."

They would see there the comparison between the two types of suburban cars—the one he was speaking of and that which was called the side-door suburban car. In 1902 those experts said the side-door suburban cars were not more suitable than the corridor cars. To-day in the railway shops of Queensland they were spending thousands of pounds to pull those cars to pieces. Whose fault was that? Was that the fault of the workmen? Was that a waste of money that the workmen could be taxed with? He remembered distinctly seeing those particular cars pulled to pieces at a cost of £600, £700, £800, and put on to long distance runs to Dirranbandi and various other lines; and suburban traffic was being carried on with carriages having side doors and carrying ninety passengers, with an increased weight of only about a ton. He was not going to condemn the system which prevailed in those days of railway management. The system was not any better to-day—not one iota—as far as the management was concerned. It was not possible for a Labour Government to undo in three years what had taken thirty years to do under Liberal Governments. The same management was there to-day, and had to be handled by the Labour Government; and it was being handled by the Labour Government. They were handling the question of mismanagement every day; and what was it? Nothing but a legacy which had been left to them by those people by whom they were now being criticised. They talked about political influence being brought to bear on the Commissioner. The Commissioner was protected by an Act such as no other Commissioner he knew of was protected by. He could flaunt the Minister for Railways at any time. He (Mr. Weir) was not going to pry into the business of the Minister or the Commissioner and suggest that he did so; but he would say that the Act enabled him to do it. While that sort of thing was carried on, they could not expect to get the best out of anything. His conception was that the member for Fitzroy was on the right track when he suggested that the Commissioner should be directly

subservient to the Minister of the day, so that the Government of the day could be held directly responsible for what was being done. What he blamed the Commissioner for was not that he drew £2,250 a year, but that he did so and in his annual report all he could do to make a better state of affairs was to ask questions. Why did he ask those questions? It seemed to him that the very reason was to give hon. members like the hon. member for Murrumba the privilege of criticising the Government. Why was he not honourable enough to tackle those things? There was no case in the Queensland railways to-day that he knew of where the Commissioner himself had sacked a man for incompetency. The Act allowed him to do it. Railway men generally had the right of appeal against everybody else's decision, but they had not that right of appeal against the Commissioner's decision. The Commissioner had a right to go along and say, "Put on your hat and go," and no appeal lay under the Act against the Commissioner's decision. The fact that he had not done it he considered was a guarantee that there was no necessity for doing it. There was no practical reason and no argument in favour of doing such a thing, because the men working under him were doing "their bit," and always had been. He knew why they were not turning out work as they ought, and he would give it to the House, so far as his own district was concerned. It had been going on for years. He had seen it at Caboolture and various other centres. At Maryborough they had about 3,000 tons of coal on the ground, and they had a coal stage which by no means was in keeping with the necessities of the district. The result was that instead of its being handled at, perhaps, 6d. or 6½d. up to 9d. a ton, they had to pay three handling rates; the coal was thrown on to the ground, thrown off, and turned over two or three times. That was not owing to the working of the Labour Government. It was due to the fact that action should have been taken twenty or thirty years ago to build suitable stages.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You have had a Labour Government for two and a-half years.

Mr. WEIR: Of course they had; but they could not repair the mismanagement of their predecessors for thirty years in that time.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: They ought to have the capacity or the brains to do something.

Mr. WEIR: They had not any brains; they did not claim any. The monopoly in brains apparently belonged to the Opposition. If the hon. gentleman liked to be personal—that sort of thing did not build up the Railway Department—if the judgment of brains so far as the management of railways by this and that Government was taken on the vote of the bulk of railway men, he knew where the decision would go, and he ventured to say that hon. gentlemen opposite knew too.

Mr. VOWLES: Ask the people of the country.

Mr. WEIR: They had asked them in Maryborough the other day. It might be interesting to notice that in every centre where there was any number of railway men—Bremer, Ipswich, Maryborough, Rockhampton—he did not see their representatives on that side of the House; so the verdict sometimes went the way of his party. The hon. gentleman had come to his elec-

torate and had suggested "they think they are going to get the railway vote; they are not going to do anything of the sort." They heard the same boast from the hon. member for Toowoomba. They got the railway vote, nevertheless, and he ventured to say they would get it again. (Hear, hear!) At any rate, he did not intend to deal with trivial things like that in dealing with the railway question. To get off the hon. member for Murrumba, if there was any man in that Chamber who ought to have been more careful when he criticised the administration of the Railway Department, it was the hon. member for Burrum. He had a very vivid recollection that the hon. member for Burrum knew something about coal and knew something about the increased price to the Railway Department. He (Mr. Weir) knew that the Railway Department had paid that increased price to the mines in Ipswich and in Burrum.

Colonel RANKIN: If you say all that you know, you will say more than that.

Mr. WEIR: If he said all that he knew he would say that the hon. member told this House a little while ago that the Railway Department would not take his coal. He did not tell this House he had an order from December, 1916, which had not been supplied. It was just as well if those people who sometimes challenged them to say all they knew did not speak. To get back to the other question of the increase in the price of coal. Coal had gone up in every district in Queensland. Ipswich got their portion and everybody else got theirs. The Ipswich colliery proprietors manfully handed portion of their share of the increased price to the coalminers. Did the Burrum do that?

Colonel RANKIN: That has been already refuted, and I have documentary evidence to prove the untruthfulness of the statement.

Mr. WEIR: He had asked, did the Burrum do that? He had not heard the hon. member say that they had. He recollected very vividly the controversy they had in the Maryborough papers over the matter when the brother of the hon. member challenged him with making certain statements. He repeated that here, and he was prepared to do so again.

Colonel RANKIN: Your statement, so far as my memory serves me, is absolutely wrong.

Mr. WEIR: He was sorry the hon. member's memory was so defective. The first to withdraw from the argument was the brother of the hon. member. He (Mr. Weir) was supported in his contention by the president of the two local bodies of colliery works—the Torbanlea and the Howard lodges. They stuck to him in the papers.

Colonel RANKIN: What you did state was that they paid somebody in excess of their award—which was demonstrated by a letter from the secretary of the Collieries' Association to be incorrect.

Mr. WEIR: He was making this speech.

Colonel RANKIN: I am correcting your untruths.

Mr. WEIR: If the hon. member had any desire to state all that he knew, he would still find it convenient to omit some of the things as he did on another occasion, when he read an extract from the papers.

Another question he intended to deal with was one which he thought the hon. member—if he had looked up the report—would

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have been wise to have left alone. If they were going to economise in railway matters, they must seriously consider the question as to which railways were losing the most. He was not saying that they should tackle the matter on those lines at all, as, if they did, it would mean stopping the rail-
[5.30 p.m.] way traffic to people at Dirranbandi, or anywhere else where the railways were losing money. That was not the way to run the country. It was not the idea of hon. members on the Government side; but, if what hon. members opposite said was true, the inference was that the matter should be tackled on those lines. With regard to the losses on the lines in the Southern division, he thought that the lines which showed the biggest losses were those in the electorate of the hon. member for Burrum.

Colonel RANKIN: That is in the Burnett; you are barking up the wrong tree.

Mr. WEIR: The hon. member knew something about the building of the line he was going to mention. Talking about political lines, he had here a list of about twenty lines, all of which showed a loss, and the one which showed the most loss was the Isis-Dallarnil line.

Colonel RANKIN: That was owing to the Dickson award, when all the crushing was stopped.

Mr. WEIR: Those were some of the things that hon. members opposite did not tell them about. That was where the hon. member's memory was conveniently bad. He (Mr. Weir) had stepped off the train at Booyal, and met one of the most ardent supporters of the Opposition in that district, who, in less than ten minutes, had admitted that that was a political railway, which was built on the wrong side of the river. He said that if it had been built 3 miles further over it would have served them better, and to-day, to get to Dallarnil, they had to go an extra 7 miles without benefiting the men on the land.

Colonel RANKIN: That is a reflection on the Railway Department.

Mr. WEIR: Hon. members opposite were the people who said there should be no political influence used on the Commissioner. They could see the inference which was implied—that they taxed the members on this side with doing so; but it was not now possible for the Opposition to do that sort of gerrymandering. (Laughter.) Hon. members opposite went down on their knees the other day to get the Public Works Commission to go into the Burnett. The hon. member for Burnett the other night squealed because the Government dared to build a line that did not go into his back yard. They were anxious for the Public Works Commission to go out, for some reason or other, and he did not think it was to catch birds. He was sorry for the Commissioner when he found himself in the hands of these men; he must have had a very trying experience in the building of the Dallarnil line.

There were other things he must refer to before he resumed his seat, and this was really the crux of the question with regard to maladministration of the Railway Department. In his district they lost 25 per cent. of the productive power of their wood-working mechanics on a rainy day, and they had been doing that for years.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: How?

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Mr. WEIR: An hon. gentleman who professed to lead the party which hoped to run the country some day asked, how it was. On a rainy day it was not possible to work in the Maryborough yard, but the hon. gentleman did not know that. The result was that all the mechanics went into the shed, but there was no room for more than 75 per cent. of them to work in the shed, as the shed accommodation was so limited.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: And you have been two and a-half years in office, and that has not been altered.

Mr. WEIR: He was not worried about what was going to happen in Maryborough. He was satisfied that, when the Government could do it, Maryborough would get justice. He had also made a suggestion that the Government should take in hand the question of lighting the Maryborough station yard. For years and years there had been up to £600 a year paid for lighting the Maryborough yard, but the lighting was miserably inadequate. In one corner there was a Lux light, in another corner a Kitson light, and in another corner the Maryborough gas light. He had made a suggestion to the Railway Department to light the yard by electricity, the anticipated cost of which would be £1,500. A capital cost of £1,500 would be sufficient to provide for lighting the yard, which had been carrying a load of £600 per year for that purpose.

Mr. MOORE: What will the annual cost be for electricity?

Mr. WEIR: A mere bagatelle. If the hon. member wanted an object lesson, and would come to him, he would show him the Lux light and explain all about it. These things were going to be attended to in due course by this party, and when it got time to consider these questions that was where the saving would come in. They had recently had a glaring instance of incompetency—not by the men, but by the heads, who had held a round-table conference in Maryborough to prepare a diagram working for Maryborough men. After four alterations had been made, as the outcome of adverse criticism by the men, the work of preparing the diagram was subsequently handed over to the men. The heads were not competent; and these heads were left as legacies from former days. This state of affairs had been going on for the last thirty years.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Have they disclosed these things in the inquiry by the Railway Commission?

Mr. WEIR: The Railway Commission had not been in his district yet. Those were cases where money was being wasted. Fifteen years ago they used to paint carriages in Maryborough, and when he tackled the brother of the hon. member for Burnett in the newspapers, and other people, about this they woke up to find that these things had been done, and tried to blame him (Mr. Weir) for the fact that their ancestors had allowed these things to go on. The carriages had been allowed to get into a most disgraceful state, and the Ipswich shops were working overtime to try and bring them up to date. He did not blame the Government for having them painted in Ipswich, because the appliances there were, in some respects, the most up-to-date in Australia, but he did blame the late Government for permitting such a shocking neglect of Mary-

borough interests to bring about the necessity at present existing for Maryborough work to be sent to Ipswich. The present Government were going to have all these things attended to, and when they were adjusted the Government would be able to see that the Railway Department paid the men a decent wage. He would sooner see the debit balance increased, if necessary, in order that the men might be paid a decent wage.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He wished to say a few words before the Minister replied. He had asked the Minister a few weeks ago a question in regard to the position of the Railway Traffic Employees' Union, registered under the Arbitration Act of 1916. He was very anxious to know whether the members of that union were paid on the same scale as members of the other unions which were brought under the McCawley award. He understood the Minister to say "Yes"; but he was told by members of the union that such was not the case. He did not know whether the Minister had been misinformed. He would like a definite statement from the Minister as to whether all members of the railway service were being paid the award rates; or whether some of them, because they did not make application to the court to come under the award, were not participating therein. They had listened to a dissertation by the hon. member for Maryborough upon the condition of affairs in the Railway Department during the late regime, and, strange to say, the hon. member had pointed out that a similar condition of things existed to-day. One would have imagined that if things were as bad as they were stated to be by the hon. member for Maryborough, the present Government during the last two and a-half years would have endeavoured to improve those conditions, but they had not done so. They had appointed a Royal Commission to make inquiry into the service, but they were most unfortunate in their choice of members, because, apart altogether from the personnel of the commissioners appointed, they had not had the training necessary to enable them to inquire into such a large branch of the service as the Railway Department and to submit a report which would be satisfactory to the public. The evidence taken by the commission, which had been published in the Press, indicated that they had not been getting down to bedrock in regard to their investigations; but he would not speak on that matter now, as he would have an opportunity of dealing with it on another occasion. The Commissioner had sounded a warning note with regard to the railway service. At the present time, he practically told them that there was a great degree of inefficiency in the service, and that the State was not getting its money's worth. If that were so, then it devolved upon the Government to see that that condition of things was altered. The Commissioner never found it necessary to sound a warning note like that in the past. He had been told that to-day the railway service was practically a subsidiary department to the Trades Hall. Many times he had had to make application for employment for working men, and he was told they had to go to some labour bureau and get their names registered there, notwithstanding that the Act placed the whole control of employing the servants of the Railway Department in the hands of the Commissioner. When the Government took out of the Commis-

sioner's hands the control of the railways what could they expect? Only a few months ago, when neither the Commissioner or the Minister had anything whatsoever to do with regard to that great big Railway Department, the whole of it was handed over to the Treasurer to try to bring things into working order again. They sent him to Townsville to try to prevent the strike, and when he got there the strikers ignored him.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: Thank God, Fuller was not here!

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman had reason to go down on his knees and thank God for some things himself. He was only pointing out that the whole control of the work was taken out of the hands of the Commissioner. If the Commissioner were not the Commissioner, then he could not control the service, and if the Minister were not the Minister for Railways in the administration of his department, how could the department be administered as it should? He had never in the course of his parliamentary experience found a report submitted to the House by a head of the department such as the Railway Commissioner's report.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: There has been a change of Government.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Commissioner never had a Labour Government in before, and he (Mr. Tolmie) believed that if the country was well advised—as he believed it was—they would never have a Labour Government again. He was sorry that conditions were such that he could not discuss the report to the fullest extent. He was trying to keep to the arrangement entered into the other night, but he never anticipated, nor did the evidence in "Hansard" show him, that hon. gentlemen opposite would take the floor as they had done for their full twenty-five minutes.

HON. J. A. FIDELLY: It was your own proposal.

HON. J. TOLMIE: It was not, and if hon. members would insist in that he would not consider the arrangement made as of any effect whatever. He was trying, notwithstanding hon. members' disorderly interjections, to deal with the Railway Department as administered by the present Minister, and he was exceedingly sorry that the conditions were such that the control seemed to be taken out of the hands of the Minister for Railways and the Commissioner, and it seemed to be just an appanage of the Trades Hall. With regard to that, he happened to be in the Railway Department on one occasion, and he saw a very irate individual who came an hour late for an appointment he had made, but he said that a certain person would have to receive him, that he was secretary of a certain trades union, that a certain resolution which had been passed would have to be carried out, and he was going to see that it was carried out. He (Mr. Tolmie) encouraged him and told him it was his bounden duty to see it carried out; what was the use of the Labour party being in power if he did not use his authority to the fullest extent, and see that the railway service knuckled down to him and his union? The country understood that the railway service seemed to have practically passed out of the control both of the Minister and the Commissioner.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He understood that hon. members on both

sides had practically finished discussing the chief vote of the Railway Department, and it was only fair that he should reply to some of the criticisms advanced against his department. The amount of the vote was £5,135 more than last year. That was brought about in this way: The amount required to pay the award rates was £3,911; three officers had been returned to the audit office in consequence of the centralisation of the work, and their salaries amounted to £620; four men had returned from the war, and their salaries amounted to £626. Four juniors appointed = £200; and an additional clerk at £225. There was a reduction in the salaries of staff clerks amounting to £507. All that showed a net increase for the office of £5,135. He wished to refer for a moment to some of the criticisms of hon. gentlemen opposite. The hon. member for Toowong, he supposed, made the most bitter speech he had ever heard him make, without any regard whatever to the correctness of what he was saying. He showed his natural venom for trades unionism in his criticisms of the department, and in his remarks about the Trades Hall, and what they were doing and going to do, and ruining the country and all the rest of it. But there was one bright spot in his speech, and that was when he referred to the employees of the Railway Commissioner who had gone to do their duty at the front, and he had also referred to the number who had made the supreme sacrifice there. He was sure every member of the House would join him in deploring the fact that they had lost so many of those brave men. (Hear, hear!) At the time the hon. member for Toowong was eulogising those men for doing their duty to the Empire, he was at the same time damning them in every term that came to his mind, when he was damning those who remained behind as slackers and shirkers, because when he was so damning them he was in numerous cases damning the fathers and brothers of those men who had gone to the front.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I think that is a sweeping charge.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Those were the irresponsible sweeping charges that were made by hon. members opposite, and which they were sorry for afterwards, but had no intention of withdrawing.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: You will not find that in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was there in "Hansard." He took it down at the time and had it there, and he thought it was very much to be deplored that any hon. member should get up and in that irresponsible way, in order to give vent to his venom, damn the fathers and brothers of those brave men who had gone to fight the battles of the Empire, and who in a number of cases had paid the supreme sacrifice. A number of things had been said that had been called criticisms, but were hardly worth while referring to. They had the usual dissertation from the hon. member for Drayton, who was fast becoming the most irresponsible member in the House, because nobody made more rash statements than he. The hon. member said that certain employees of the Railway Department wired to the Commissioner and excused themselves for doing their duty a short time ago, and asked the Commissioner if they had done

right. What could they think of any hon. member who made a statement like that in his place in the House? Could they say he was anything but an absolute irresponsible? He also said there was a proclamation issued by the Minister that the employees of the Commissioner were not to do certain things. What was done on that occasion was to try to protect the alleged friends of the hon. member for Drayton. He (the Minister) knew very well there was a possibility of perishable produce being sent to Wallangarra, and he knew very well it could not be taken from Wallangarra, and he advised the consignors of such produce not to send it over the line as there was a danger of its being destroyed at Wallangarra. Was that not an honest thing to do when he knew that would take place? Had the stuff gone to Wallangarra and been handled there at that time what would have happened? It would have perished just the same. The average running for a goods train from Wallangarra to Sydney was four days, and they knew that no provision was made for cold storage on those trains, and that perishable produce would be lost in that time. The hon. member also went on in his remarkable way to refer to the interference by railway servants with women. There was no interference that could be punished by the by-laws of the Commissioner. There was nothing done to interfere with the servants of the Commissioner, and therefore, the by-laws were not put into operation. The hon. member also referred to women and children who could not carry their luggage. He, the Minister, presumed it was a widow he was referring to, because it was the poor old widow who was always referred to when such canards were being circulated.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I heard of a case myself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Murrumba also made some very wild statements this afternoon. He said that the Auditor-General had recommended a business man for the railways. He (Mr. Coyne) was not questioning the right or the wrong of any advice given by the Auditor-General in that connection, but the hon. member for Murrumba said he should be independent of Parliament altogether. That was a very fine suggestion for the hon. member for Murrumba, but it was one that he (Mr. Coyne), at any rate, could not agree to. He thought no man in such a responsible position as that should be free of parliamentary interference, because if that were so he could do what he liked to ruin the

[7 p.m.] country without any control by Parliament. The hon. member for Murrumba had twice referred to what he called the fact that the record railway revenue for Queensland was received last year. The hon. member seemed to be very reckless—in fact, recklessness seemed to be a disease with the Opposition. In making his opening speech he said that the year 1914-15 was the record earning year for the railways. That was disputed on two occasions by the hon. member for Murrumba and the hon. member for Burrum. On page 31 of the Commissioner's report they would see that in 1914-15 the earnings were £3,832,003, whereas in 1916-17 the earnings were £3,831,967, and on top of that they had to pay all the additional interest. Hon. members seemed to ignore that in their criticism of the department. If hon. members were prepared to offer any advice they ought to

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be fair, at any rate. One hon. member said that the only thing that was buoyant about the Railway Department was the expenditure. He would ask him, as he asked several other hon. members, what item of expenditure was he prepared to cut out? All hon. members on the other side religiously avoided answering that question.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Of course, we did. Why should we answer such questions as that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Murrumba, the leader of the Opposition, and his followers had asked him, "How are you going to make up this deficit?" When he asked the hon. member for Murrumba what he would do, he said, "That is my business," and he said in answer to hon. members opposite that what the Government proposed to do to make up any leeway was the Government's business.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: By a land tax.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was the Government's business to find the ways and means for balancing the accounts of the Railway Department or any other department.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Your ways are land tax.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: His ways were not the incorrect ways with which the hon. member dealt with every subject he tackled in the House. The hon. member came along that afternoon with a freshly blown-up balloon, but he had not been going five minutes before it was pricked, and he cleared out of the Chamber. No sane man or woman in Queensland would believe one solitary word the hon. member said. The hon. member for Burrum condemned the Government because they did not give a special rate for the carriage of goods to Urangan.

Colonel RANKIN: That was only a small item

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If that was only a small item, bearing in mind the amount of noise the hon. member made about it, he would like to hear him on one of the big items. He saw a report that morning from the Commissioner for Railways to the effect that 100 of their wagons were hung up at Urangan because the stuff that was on them could not be handled. Supposing that they had doubled or trebled the rolling-stock on that line, the whole railway would be covered with trucks waiting to be dealt with.

Colonel RANKIN: That can be explained by the fact that they commenced running their trucks down before they erected the sheds.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The fact remained that not one tithe of that sugar would be going to Urangan if there were room to store it at New Farm.

Colonel RANKIN: Quite right, with the freight you charge.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member knew very well that they could not get shipping to Urangan when they could get it to Brisbane, and they wanted to send it to the place where they got the quickest transit. It was only once in a long time that a ship went into Urangan, whereas there was constant shipping to Brisbane. The hon. member said that they were not doing anything for the sugar-grower.

Yet they were carrying sugar 182 miles from Millaquin to Rockhampton at 13s., whereas the ordinary rate was 6s. 9d. From Millaquin to Maryborough, 57 miles, the ordinary rate was 56s., and they were carrying it for 11s. 4d. From Millaquin to Gladstone, 113 miles, the ordinary rate was 45s. 8d.; they were carrying it for 15s. 4d. Yet the hon. member had the presumption to come along and tell them that they were doing nothing for the cane farmers. The hon. member wanted them to grant a special rate at a time when it would suit the convenience of somebody to send produce to Urangan, although ordinarily they sent it to another port for which a rate had been struck.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: An ordinary business man would make that arrangement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would do nothing of the sort. He would say, "I will take it where you have always sent it, and nowhere else." Private enterprise charged three times the rates the Government were charging—for instance, on the Aramac tramway. What did hon. members say to that?

Colonel RANKIN: According to your argument, people should send sugar where you want it, and not where they want it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nothing of the sort, but it would not be a fair thing to Queensland if they were to send their rolling-stock to a particular part of the country, simply because they were asked. What did the hon. member want?

Colonel RANKIN: I have pointed out that the port was full of sugar before the vessel came in, and instead of discharging the stores they continued to unload train loads of sugar.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was just what he had said—the New Farm storage was occupied, and Urangan was utilised so soon as that happened. Now they found, with all their demands for trucks and everything else, that they had not got the storage, and the sugar had to remain on the department's trucks. (Opposition dissent.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What the department was doing for the primary producers in Queensland was something which was designedly or otherwise overlooked by members opposite. There was not a primary producer in Queensland who did not know that the Government had done more for him in the matter of cheaper freights than any other Government in any State of Australia.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You raised the freight on dairy produce 43 per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They had only to pick up the Commissioner's report to find that almost every agricultural line in Queensland was not paying, and the reason was because they were carrying cream and butter practically for nothing. They were still prepared to go on, but when they had a lot of irresponsibles coming into the House day after day condemning the Government for the help they gave, it was time they raised their protest.

Mr. BEBBINGTON interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member continues to disobey my call to order,

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I shall be reluctantly compelled to deal with him in another way. The hon. member is entirely disregarding my call.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government were practically giving away no less a sum than £122,639 to encourage primary production in Queensland.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is not much.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was only the contribution of the railways.

The PREMIER: And they wanted to allow only £10,000 for iron and steel works last night.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. member could point to any industry in Queensland in the developmental stage in regard to which the Government had raised the rates, he would like him to say which it was. The leader of the Opposition—who was not very often guilty of misrepresenting things in the way he had that night—said that the employees in the Commissioner's office were recruited partly from the Trades Hall. Of course, that was all right when they were trying to fool the electors at election time.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: If you would give me half an hour I would prove it to the hilt.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would give the hon. member twenty hours, and he would not prove anything of that sort. It has been the practice of the Government for the last two years—and if the hon. member did not know it, he ought to know it—that where casual employment was to be given in the Railway Department or any other department, it had to come through the Government Labour Bureau.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the keynote of the whole thing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the keynote of the whole thing. Was the Labour Bureau in the Trades Hall?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No, no.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Had it any connection with the Trades Hall?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was a sub-department of the Works Department.

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

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He hoped the hon. gentleman would not make himself worse than what he was now.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Does not the Act prescribe hours for the Commissioner?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Act provided it, and the Commissioner took full advantage of the powers granted him under the Act. In reply to the hon. member for Murrumba, and the hon. member for Toombul—who said that the Commissioner was being interfered with by the Minister—he wanted to say that that was absolutely untrue.

Mr. VOWLES: No—by the Trades Hall.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: By the Trades Hall! By the National Political Council, they might as well say. (Government laughter.) The Commissioner for Railways was not interfered with in any of his

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functions by the Minister. Whilst he had sometimes differed with suggestions made by the Commissioner, and while the Commissioner had sometimes differed with some of his suggestions, he wanted to say that there was perfect harmony so far as the Commissioner and himself were concerned.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I quite believe that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Now, he wanted to say that all casual employment in the Railway Department—the Works Department, the Chief Secretary's Department, or anywhere else, that had to be given—had to be given through the Labour Bureau; for the simple reason that the Government were afraid there might be some accusation of political favouritism levelled against them. They knew what class of people they were dealing with on the Opposition side of the House, and how readily at all times they were to manufacture something against the Government. They thought they would say, "They are using political influence to get their people into jobs, and keep out those who are opposed to them." In order to do away with all possible chance of that being said, all casual employment was being given through the Labour Bureau; and the other employment, so far as the Railway Department was concerned, was in the hands of the Commissioner for Railways. It was the same way with all the other departments. If an examination was provided, they had to pass their examination, and they were employed accordingly. It had been said that the Commissioner was being overpaid. He did not agree with that. Seeing the great responsibility which the Commissioner for Railways had placed on him, the first duty of the Government was to select the best man. He presumed the Government did select what they thought was the best man. (Hear, hear!) As that was so, he did not think he was being overpaid. He knew for a fact that if private enterprise had a manager managing such a big capital concern as that, they would pay him a much bigger salary. He understood it was not very long ago since the general manager of Mount Morgan Mine got £10,000 a year. If that was so, surely they were not overpaying the Commissioner for Railways. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I am glad to hear you say that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He wanted to say also that whilst the finances of the Government did not permit the Government to do what they would like to do in connection with the other employees of the Railway Commissioner, some of them were not getting as well paid as they should be. (Hear, hear!) He would refer to one particular man. It might seem wrong for him to single that man out; but his work, and his attention to work, his energy and industry, and the amount of time he spent, and the great amount of work he accomplished, compelled him to mention it. He referred to the Secretary to the Commissioner, Mr. Crowther.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no harder worked man in the public service to-day than Mr. Crowther.

Mr. FORSYTH: He is a particularly good man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He never spared himself; he was ready to come out night or day, Saturday, or even Sunday, in order to see that the work of the Commissioner was carried out properly. He hoped before very long that the Government would be in a position to reward Mr. Crowther for the excellent work which he did for the department. (Hear, hear!) He thought he had replied to all the criticisms which had been made.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Before you sit down, did I understand you to say that last year was not a record year for revenue.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: We have your own statement here to show it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If the hon. gentleman would look at page 31 of the Commissioner's report he would see that his statement was correct.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Look at page 5.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: On page 31 would be found a summary of working for the past five years. The hon. gentleman was talking about the gross railway revenue. Would he look at the summary for the past five years?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That is the statement you made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the table he had to rely upon; that was the one he, the speaker, was relying upon for his statement, and his statement was absolutely correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He is talking about gross earnings.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; the earnings were not the net revenue. He thought he had replied to all the criticisms from hon. members opposite. He hoped it would not take very long to get the other items through. He would refer to anything in reason that they might require by way of information.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Before that item went through, he wanted the Minister to look at page 5 of the Commissioner for Railways' report where they had two tables set down. For the year 1915-16 the revenue was £3,745,350. For 1916-17 it was £3,831,967—an increase of £86,617.

Question put and passed.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That £2,105,443 be granted for "Southern Division."

Question put and passed.

CENTRAL DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That £548,407 be granted for "Central Division."

Question put and passed.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That £713,848 be granted for "Northern Division."

Question put and passed.

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That £4,256 be granted for "Chief Office." Members would note that last year the total sum provided for that vote was £3,934, and this year it was £4,256, and there was an increase on the vote this year, therefore, of £322. He just wanted to say that, as members knew, the Home Secretary was away at a very important conference and expected to be back before the vote went through.

Mr. FORSYTH: Take the Chief Secretary's Estimates.

The PREMIER: The Government decide what Estimates shall be brought on.

Mr. FORSYTH: I said nothing about the Home Secretary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That was a matter between hon. members opposite and the leader of the Government.

Mr. MURPHY: What was the agreement?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would sit down until hon. members made up their minds what they were going to do about it. The Home Secretary expected to be back shortly.

Mr. MURPHY: Supposing he is not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Whether he was or not, in the meantime he (Mr. Hardacre) had been asked to take charge of those Estimates, and he would be very glad to give any information hon. members desired.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Before the vote went through, he wanted to say a word or two. He understood it was desired to put through two Estimates that night—the Railway Estimates and the Chief Secretary's or the Home Secretary's Department. He found in "Hansard" that the understanding was that they should have a fair amount of time for criticism of those Estimates. That had been departed from by hon. gentlemen on the other side.

The PREMIER: What has been departed from?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: That understanding I see in "Hansard," that there should be a fair amount of criticism.

The PREMIER: Where is that in "Hansard"?

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Macartney, who apparently made the arrangement, said "Are we to be allowed reasonable discussion?" The Premier said, "It is to be fitted in in the time." Mr. Macartney then said, "Your side will not cut out all the time?" The Premier replied, "That is a matter for whoever is in the Chair. It will be at the option of the Government to say whether the Chief Secretary's or the Home Secretary's Estimates will be taken, the understanding being that both the Railway Estimates and either of them be finished on that day." At any rate, that was the understanding, and it had been departed from, it appeared, much like all understandings made by the other side—by a backdoor out of which they could escape. They were asked to deal with the Estimates of a most important department in the absence of the Minister. The Chief Secretary sat there; he had his Estimates at his own hand, and he could go on with them if necessary, but he was not doing so. He was

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taking the big department—the Home Secretary's Department—relying on the Opposition to carry out the arrangement to see that those Estimates were put through. They would do that to the fullest extent.

The PREMIER: I was quite agreeable to any reasonable arrangement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He wanted to make it clear that if they were circumscribed for time, and unable to give the discussion to these Estimates that they would [7.30 p.m.] like between now and half-past 10 o'clock, they would take whatever advantage was allowed to them when the resolutions were reported to the House, and the Home Secretary was in his place to reply to any criticism that might be made. They were aware that the hon. gentleman temporarily in charge of the Estimates did not know the work of this department, and could not answer the questions put in relation to the department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have the officers here, and can get the information from them.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That was the position last year with some of the Ministers when seeking to give information to the House; they had to get the information from their officers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have got a lot of information besides this.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: When you were in the Lands Office you ran up and down there very often.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He knew his work in the department thoroughly. As far as the head office of the Home Secretary's Department was concerned he did not know that there was anything in regard to this item that he was going to take exception to. He had come into contact with the officers in the chief office, and he had no complaints to make with regard to their work. He had received every courtesy at the hands of the Minister, who he was sorry was not here for the purpose of taking charge of his own Estimates, because there were many things in the Estimates with which they did not agree, and which they would like to discuss in the presence of the Minister.

The PREMIER: He rose in consequence of the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to the arrangements which were made on Friday evening last. As hon. members would remember, they were discussing the Estimates of the Railway Department on Friday afternoon, and some hon. members opposite were desirous of having an adjournment. An arrangement was come to whereby it was agreed that, if the House adjourned at 6 o'clock, it would count as a day, and that the Estimates would be taken again this week, and the Railway Estimates and either the Home Secretary or the Chief Secretary's Estimates be completed in one night. He had suggested Friday night, and that was the arrangement come to. When he was announcing the arrangement, the acting leader of the Opposition interjected, "We to be allowed reasonable discussion."

HON. J. TOLMIE: How was the arrangement made?

The PREMIER: It was made through the "Whips."

HON. J. TOLMIE: And did the hon. member for Toowong not take the first opportunity of telling you by way of interjection.

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The PREMIER: In moving the adjournment he had announced what the arrangement was.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Yes, and he immediately said that such was not the arrangement.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member could show him that that was reported in "Hansard," he would immediately put the Home Secretary's Estimates aside and go on with the Chief Secretary's Estimates. Would the hon. member accept the challenge, and show that it was there?

HON. J. TOLMIE: I read it out to the hon. gentleman.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member for Toowong repudiated the arrangement then, or said anything which could easily be interpreted as repudiating it, he would take off the Home Secretary's Estimates and go on with the Chief Secretary's Estimates. That was not the spirit in which he had risen. He knew that the Home Secretary's Estimates were heavy Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: And you want to get away.

The PREMIER: He had to address a meeting in connection with the Liberty Loan this evening—it was a public duty that he had to perform—otherwise he would have been taking the Chief Secretary's Estimates, as hon. members knew. But some other Minister could take charge of his Estimates until he came back after discharging that public function. He had not the slightest objection to go on to-night with the Chief Secretary's Estimates, letting the Home Secretary's Estimates stand over, and by agreement fixing a whole day for the Home Secretary's Estimates.

HON. J. TOLMIE: We can come to no such arrangement.

The PREMIER: The acting leader of the Opposition last Friday agreed to finish the Railway Estimates and the Home Secretary's Estimates in one day, and they could have a whole day for them or any other reasonable time, providing they could come to some arrangement as to what the time should be. He was prepared to meet the hon. gentleman in any arrangement which he (Mr. Ryan) thought was reasonable. He had no desire to force these Estimates through the House to-night.

Colonel RANKIN: Why put a limit on the Home Secretary's Estimates? You have a limit under the Standing Orders.

The PREMIER: He had no desire to put a limit on them, but an arrangement was made whereby the Railway Estimates and Home Secretary's Estimates should be finished to-night. When he closed down at 6 p.m. on Friday evening last, he had performed his part of the bargain. He adjourned at 6 p.m. on Friday; he could not go back; he had performed his part of the bargain; and now the Opposition had endeavoured to get out of its part.

HON. J. TOLMIE: You would not control your supporters this afternoon; you wanted to throw the responsibility on us.

The PREMIER: He made no arrangement that there would not be discussion from his side; there would be reasonable discussion from both sides.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The Opposition have their rights.

The PREMIER: Of course they had, but the understanding was that each side would have a fair amount of discussion. He did

not wish to occupy much time in discussing this matter of arrangement. He was quite prepared to come to an understanding whereby the Home Secretary's Estimates would not be taken to-night, and that they should go on with the Chief Secretary's Estimates, provided some reasonable arrangement as to time was made.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They had a certain number of days for discussion of the Estimates. The Chief Secretary was endeavouring to push the Estimates through the Committee. By the arrangement he had made he would get the Estimates of two departments through to-night, but he could give the hon. gentleman his assurance that the Opposition were going to take the full time the Standing Orders allowed them to discuss the remainder of the Estimates, if they thought fit.

THE PREMIER: And you will sit the full number of days that I can make you sit too. There are six days in the week, you know.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman could bully as much as he liked, and be as childish as he pleased.

THE PREMIER: It is not childish. I will use the power that I have. We will see who has the greater power.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. gentleman had the power of numbers, and could arrange the business as he pleased. The Opposition would keep their agreement if hon. members opposite did not. Did anyone think that they were going to make an agreement by which they would be shut up here as they were shut up by hon. members opposite? Was the arrangement made last Friday in order that the Premier might go down to Liberty Fair?

THE PREMIER: No. You are wrong.

HON. J. TOLMIE: I say "Yes."

THE PREMIER: No, you are absolutely wrong. It was the acting leader of the Opposition who wanted the adjournment. Have some regard for truth.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had an absolute regard for truth.

THE PREMIER: You have not; I did not go near Liberty Fair.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Hon. members opposite got the concession granted to them. The Opposition were prepared to go on. If they got an opportunity for fair criticism, well and good; if they did not, they would utilise the forms of the House hereafter. He would make no arrangement with the Chief Secretary for the purpose of burking discussion on the other Estimates.

THE PREMIER: It is a wonder you got the arrangement the other night by your deputy. He made the arrangement and you repudiate it.

Question—That £4,256 be granted for "Chief Office—Home Secretary's Department"—put and passed.

RELIEF OF ABORIGINALS.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That £27,179 be granted for "Relief of Aborigines." Last year a sum of £30,298 was asked for, but this year the amount put down was £27,179, a decrease of £3,119.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The sum of £250 was put down this year for a manager, while

last year it was only £170. The matron had apparently been dismissed, because there was no provision made for a matron. The Minister might inform them why there had been an increase of £80 for the manager, and whether it was in accordance with the Public Service Act. Perhaps one of the officers of the department could give the Minister the information required.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He understood the reason for the change was that the former manager was in some respects inefficient in regard to the knowledge required, particularly in connection with stock, and it was decided to get someone else who was more acquainted with stock, especially in view of a suggestion that was under consideration that they should stock the place and make more use of it.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Have you made any provision for stocking it?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That was still under consideration.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Who have you appointed?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They had appointed a new manager at £250, in place of the late manager who received £170.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Do you know who he is?

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Mr. Lipscombe was still there. The new appointment was only under consideration and had not eventuated. Mr. Lipscombe was not receiving the extra amount, but just the amount he formerly received.

MR. ROBERTS: After listening to the explanations given to the leader of the Opposition in regard to the proposed adjournment on Friday afternoon, he would even now ask that after this vote was passed that the matter of the Home Secretary's Estimates might be postponed.

THE PREMIER: Don't you think I made a reasonable offer about that.

MR. ROBERTS: He contended that the Home Secretary's Estimates dealt with a large section of the people who were unable to look after themselves from various causes, and they knew that the Home Secretary had visited almost all the various institutions, and they had just had an instance of how handicapped they would be in dealing with the Estimates in his absence. He thought the Chief Secretary would admit that last Friday, when he promised to take the Chief Secretary's or the Home Secretary's Estimates, he didn't inform the House they would be taken in the absence of the Home Secretary himself.

THE PREMIER: I made you an offer of a whole day for these Estimates.

MR. ROBERTS: He did not think that was fair. They had seventeen days to discuss the Estimates, and if hon. members liked to take a certain proportion of the time on certain Estimates, he thought they were entitled to that time. They could not take more than seventeen days, but if they liked to discuss the Home Secretary's Estimates for seventeen days they could.

THE PREMIER: Did you not agree to take the Railways and the Home Secretary's in one day?

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Mr. ROBERTS: No, they did not agree to that.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you know; you were not here?

Mr. ROBERTS: He was there, and he was surprised that the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture should say he was not, because he came specially. In fact, he relieved the present Chairman in the chair in order to enable him to take the Speaker's chair.

Hon. J. A. FIDELLY: Where were you last night, when there were only five members on your side?

Mr. ROBERTS: Whatever his movements were last night, he was not in the company of the Hon. the Assistant Minister for Justice. He wished to assure the Chief Secretary that he did not want to usurp his functions in any way, because he knew he would not let him for a moment, but he wished to go back to the position in which they were on Friday. The statement was correct that the arrangement was to deal with the Chief Secretary's or the Home Secretary's Estimates. His objection to taking the Home Secretary's Estimates now was that the Home Secretary was not here. He wanted some information himself, not on this vote in particular, but on other votes. What did they find when they asked for information? First of all, they were told that the manager was appointed at £250, and then at a later stage, when the question was pressed further, they were told that a man was not yet appointed, and it was only contemplated. He was not blaming the Minister for Public Instruction. He knew he could not be expected to have the information. On page 19 of the same vote he found, in connection with the Taroom Settlement: Superintendent, last year, £160; this year, £160. Matron, last year, £50; this year, nothing. They might as well ask where the matron had gone. (Laughter.) He certainly thought the Chief Secretary could yet be reasonable. He said he could go on with his Estimates, and he (Mr. Roberts) thought he might reasonably pass this vote and then await the arrival of the Home Secretary to consider these Estimates.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There was one thing he would like some information on. He understood that pastoralists employing aboriginals were under very strict laws. For instance, they must not remove them from a certain district, and he was of opinion that in most places they must be paid union wages.

Mr. LAND: A good thing, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Just so. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Balonne that it was a good thing, but here they found there were two native police, two stockmen, one carpenter, one horse boy, two shepherds, and one hospital attendant at £12 each. Why did the Government employ them? If the Government were to be allowed native labour at £12 per annum, how was it that anyone else must pay them union wages? Why should the Government be allowed to break union rules in this respect? He would ask the Secretary for Public Instruction for some information on that point. Could farmers get those men at the same price? Were those men to be allowed to compete with union hands and cut down wages? He had been on stations right away to the Gulf, and the

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aboriginal there was as fine a stockman as they could get, and the Government employed them here at £12 a year to compete with white labour, and that under a Labour Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would like to make a suggestion to hon. members, that they should ask for any information they desired and by the time the vote was put through he would undertake to have the information for hon. members.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will not be here. I want it now. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Unfortunately, the hon. member could not get just what he wanted. So far as the aboriginal wages were concerned they were under the jurisdiction of the Protector of Aborigines, who in all cases did his utmost to see they got proper wages and proper conditions of employment and that some of their wages were put to their banking account. If hon. members were not really desirous of making criticisms for the purpose of tangling up the Estimates in some way, and if they wanted the information, he would undertake to get it before the vote was put through. He would just like to say also that the Hon. the Home Secretary would be back very shortly, when the difficulty would pass away.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He wanted the Acting Home Secretary to understand they had quite a number of Estimates to put through and he wanted to carry out the arrangements to put them through by half-past 10. To do that there were only one or two members who could speak on each item and they were going to try to restrict themselves to that. Consequently they could not give the Acting Home Secretary the assistance he asked, but perhaps the Secretary for Agriculture might act as a sort of go-between from the Under Secretary to the Secretary for Public Instruction, and whilst a member was speaking he might be able to get the information and pass it on to the Acting Home Secretary and thereby save time. That would expedite the matter, and he trusted that any assistance the Secretary for Agriculture could give his colleague would be given and hon. members on that side would appreciate it.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) regretted that the Premier should rush through the Estimates of the Home Secretary's Department to-night and not go on to his own department. He looked at it from this point of view: They were dealing with £118,000 in the Chief Secretary's Estimates and with £1,014,000 in the Home Secretary's. The Home Secretary's Department was a very responsible department, and many hon. members required information which they knew they could not get from the gentleman in charge of the Treasury bench. One thing he wanted particularly to know about was in connection with electoral registration. If their time was to be limited on each of those votes it simply meant they had to neglect the criticism of important departments in which the electors were vitally interested and looking for information. Whatever arrangement was entered into, the Premier should not have taken advantage of it to rush the big Estimates through. He had the opportunity of dealing with his own department, when less criticism—or, at any rate, less money—would

be dealt with; but where the large amount of money was being considered that was where the time should be given. He just rose to give a formal protest to the Home Secretary's Estimates being gone on with. He very much regretted the arrangement.

Question put and passed.

ADVERTISING OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That £7,078 be granted for "Advertising Office." Hon. members would note that last year the sum granted was £8,910, and that this year there was a decrease of £1,832.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Why is it a decrease?

Mr. FORSYTH: If the Minister referred to the Auditor-General's report he would see that the total amount spent last year was £6,599. If that was so, why should he ask this year for £7,078, which was an increase on the amount spent last year, although the estimate last year was £8,910. Surely the Minister should try to save as much as he could on a department of that sort!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The office was getting a rather important sub-branch, and he would like to know whether it was the intention to include all advertising in the State under one department?

[8 p.m.] Since last year they had included the Railway Department's advertising, but the Chief Secretary's Department still expended certain funds. He thought that the Advertising Department, to be of the fullest advantage to the State, might include the £2,122 which was expended by the Chief Secretary's Department through the Intelligence and Tourists' Bureau. They had a staff and office in full swing and they were told that a very good man was in charge, and no doubt he was living up to the qualifications he came in with. The Intelligence Bureau got out certain pamphlets of the very greatest importance for the advertising of the State, and it struck him as rather curious that under the circumstances a part of the one business appeared to be kept separate. Was there any good reason why those two sub-branches should not be administered from one office?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The explanation of the increase was that this year they had included the amount previously spent by the Railway Department. With regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Burnett, the reason why the Tourist Bureau did not come under the control of the advertising manager must be patent to everybody. The advertising manager had been appointed for the purpose of economising and making more efficient the advertisements which had to be published, but when they were dealing with the Tourist Bureau they were dealing with something more than a policy of advertising within the State: they wished to make Queensland generally known not only to the people of their own State but to those of other States and elsewhere. The advertisements in that connection were bound up with the main question, and it had been found advisable to keep it under the Chief Secretary's administration.

Mr. D. RYAN (*Townsville*): He noticed that the manager was down for £400 and the secretary for £300 last year and also

for the coming year. He was rather sorry to see that, because, from the manager's report, he thought the Government had a very good man. He said—

"When I took control I found that Government advertising was being handled by the Railways, the Titles Office, and the board."

Now they had been centralised, and yet the Minister said that he was not going to centralise anything more in the office because the Intelligence and Tourist Bureau ought to be kept separate. The manager went on to say—

"The functions of the old board were to select newspapers in which to advertise the various Government announcements, control prices, check and pay accounts (Railways and Titles Office excepted)—"

and so on. The Government thought it better to advertise for a good manager and give him sole control, and now he found that they were not going to give him sole control. The manager also said—

"The additional functions are to control the advertising at railway stations throughout the railway system of Queensland, and also advertisements appearing in the public time-table books which were issued quarterly; also the issuing and collection of accounts, which work was formerly done by the Railways Department—"

Was that work being done by the manager? He did not know exactly. The country was paying £400 to the manager—which he thought was quite inadequate—and £300 to a secretary, a gentleman who was a very old public servant.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: And a good officer.

Mr. D. RYAN: Everybody knew he was a good officer. Why was he not getting more? Why did they not give the manager the price they must pay to get him to do all the work which the hon. member for Burnett had mentioned—because they must pay for good work. The sum of £400 was not adequate as a salary for the manager of advertising for the State. It was only the salary of a public servant in a very meagre place. Why, there were men on the "Courier" and the "Daily Mail" who were receiving £1,000 a year for doing less work than those two men were doing, and they received only £700 between them. Why could they not pay to get the best work and take the Tourist Bureau in? The report showed the value of Mr. Watson and that the Government were very wise in appointing him; at the same time, he was not satisfied that he was doing the best he could do. In the meantime they would have to pay Mr. Watson more or they would lose him.

Mr. PETERSON: Was not that job advertised and the salary stated?

Mr. D. RYAN: You were not an applicant, were you?

Mr. PETERSON: No, but I would beat you for the job. (Laughter.)

Mr. D. RYAN: He thought the House should say that those men should get more money.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): Some of the country Press had complained to him that they had not been able to deal directly with the advertising office. They had to put their business through some intermediary agent.

Mr. Gunn.]

He did not quite understand it, but he thought that if it were possible the department ought to deal directly with the country Press and not through any town agent. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The advertising manager had the whole management of the advertising in his hands and he made his own arrangements with the country Press. He understood that he made arrangements both directly with some country newspapers and indirectly through agents with whom he came into contact; but he made the best business arrangements he could. With regard to the comments of the hon. member for Townsville, they found Mr. Watson an exceedingly good manager, who was doing very effective work and saving a good deal of money. The Government appreciated the work he was doing.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He ought to know something about the matter mentioned by the hon. member for Carnarvon, but unfortunately he did not, although he was somewhat interested in it. The hon. member spoke to him about it but he could not give him the information. It had occurred to him that a pressman had said something about it, to the effect that instead of the country Press being able to get the business direct from the department there was a middleman.

HON. J. A. FIEHELY: You will recollect that for a long time the country papers would not give us the ordinary concessions that they gave agents.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had no recollection in connection with that at all. There was a Country Press Association in Brisbane, and if the manager dealt directly with them there would be no complaint, but somebody came in between the association and the Government to get a "cut in" of 20 per cent., or something of that kind. He wanted to say that, because last year he opposed the appointment—not personally, because in his opposition with regard to those matters, nothing was personal. It was only a question of whether it was properly or not properly made. Last year he did not think it was quite properly made.

The TREASURER: What do you think this year?

HON. J. TOLMIE: The position stood. He could say that the appointment was not properly made when it was made. He must say, from what he had heard, that that gentleman was a very efficient officer, and was doing his work well. He would like the Secretary for Public Instruction to give him all the information he could with regard to the point raised by the hon. member for Carnarvon.

Mr. D. RYAN: There was one point which he had forgotten. He wanted to congratulate the Government in regard to their attitude respecting North Queensland. Although they had very many pictures published of various parts of Queensland, North Queensland long had been neglected. He was glad to see that the Government had taken it into their heads to advertise North Queensland. He thought they should, because Townsville was the third port of the Commonwealth, where 25,000 people did more work than 65,000 in Brisbane. He congratulated the Government on putting party

[Mr. Gunn.

politics aside, and selecting that old pioneer of literature in Australia—Archie Meston—to write that book.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: With regard to the question whether they were giving their advertising through an agency or direct to the country Press, he understood that by a general process now they went over to the Country Press Association in Brisbane, or to agents. So far from anybody cutting in between, experience had proved that it was the very opposite. They could get a better arrangement with the Country Press Association or Reuter's than they could direct with the newspaper. He would give an example: The Government asked a certain country paper for a quote for a contract, and £60 was quoted. They then went to Reuter's Agency and got the same quotation for £30. So they found that the new arrangement gave better results to the department.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Well, they must pay Reuter's Agency, mustn't they?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: As far as the department was concerned there were a saving effected, and they got a better service.

Mr. CORSER: He noticed that there was an idea to advertise the State industries by moving pictures. He wanted to know from the Minister if the department was giving assistance by way of endowment, or otherwise, through the advertising office of that department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It was not done through the advertising manager at all; it was not under his province, nor within his jurisdiction. The Advertising Manager was an expert in the methods by which Press advertisements could be put into the Press. He knew how it could be put in more effectively—what part of an advertisement could be cut out, how it could be elaborated, enlarged, or emphasised, in some particular way—and how it would induce the advertising man in regard to space. Those matters came properly under his duties. To give him jurisdiction for a travelling picture show—even to advertise the State enterprises—was not a matter which he could adequately deal with.

Mr. ROBERTS: Was the extract which the Minister read in reply to the hon. member for Carnarvon, something that had come about since the appointment of Mr. Watson?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He understood it was not since he had been appointed; it was about three years ago.

Mr. ROBERTS: That is the reason why he pressed the point. He contended that the statement made by the hon. member for Carnarvon warranted consideration and inquiry. There was no reason why they should not do their business direct with the Press of Queensland as against some agency.

Mr. D. RYAN: Why rob the country man?

Mr. ROBERTS: He was not robbing the country man; he wanted to get at the man in the city, who must be the intermediary agent. The Minister for Education told them there was Reuter's Agency and also

the Country Press. He thought an arrangement should be made whereby the commission which was being paid could be saved. He understood the Government were out against the middleman, and yet they had a gentleman to look after the business of advertising, and he could not do his business between the people and himself without bringing in another man. He must thereby be paying at the least 20 per cent.

Mr. JONES (*Oxley*): The agents were not employed by the Government; they were employed by the newspapers. The newspapers put their advertising in the hands of an agent and gave a big discount. That agent went to the Government and quoted rates, less part of the discount which was allowed. It was a matter of common knowledge with anyone who did advertising that it could be done more cheaply through those agencies in whose hands the advertising was placed than with the newspapers themselves. If there was any complaint, the remedy rested with the newspapers; they should not place their business in the hands of the agency if they did not want it done through them. The Government did not pay the commission at all; it was the newspapers that paid the commission.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Minister told us it was better to do it through the agent.

Mr. JONES: Quite so, because the discount made it possible. If the paper said to Reuters, "We will sell you our space at a certain rate per inch, less 25 per cent.," and Reuters went to the Government and said, "We can give you 20 per cent. off this rate" and make 5 per cent. ourselves, it was better for the Government to do it and save 20 per cent. It was only reasonable for them to do it. He was quite certain that if the Government did not do it, they would hear an outcry from the other side of the House that the Government were doing business wastefully and not saving 20 per cent. The whole matter rested entirely with the papers; they could dispense with the services of the middleman if they wished.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The hon. member for Oxley appeared to know a great deal about this matter, but he did not know everything. The country Press for some time had an association of their own, and that association did the business for the country Press. He gathered from what was said that the Country Press Association had approached the Government with a view to taking over that advertising, and the Government refused.

Mr. JONES: That was not Mr. Gunn's complaint.

Mr. D. RYAN: A lot of their country members were farmers, and they wrote to certain city productions which circulated in that House, in the country, and in the city, and he did not see why the Government should be debarred from giving those poor men a chance, when writing those letters, of getting some little commission on advertisements. He thought the matter should stand as it was.

Mr. GILLIES (*Eacham*): He had listened with a great deal of interest to what had been said on both sides of the House with regard to the question of employing agents. He had not been able to see any reason why

either the country newspapers or the Government should pay commission if what the hon. member for Oxley said was right. He would be quite satisfied if the Minister would give an assurance that the country newspaper could approach the Government direct and get that work. The Minister had not made that clear. He also would like to know why Reuters's or even the Country Press Association should get a commission out of work which the Government had to do. It appeared to him that while the Government had work to do, there was no need for the middleman, because the Government surely knew what price they were prepared to pay for their advertising or their work. That being so, there should be no necessity for either 10 per cent. or 20 per cent. being collected by city agents. He would like some assurance from the Minister that what the member for Oxley said was true—that country newspapers could approach the advertising manager direct and get the work.

HON. J. A. FIELLY: He thought anyone who examined the whole position would find that the fault was not with the Advertising Branch, or with Reuters, but rested entirely with the country newspapers. What the hon. member for Eacham said was quite correct—they should not have a middleman if they could possibly dispense with him. The position was not—as he stated—that the Government was aware of the rates charged by country newspapers. They had a special Government rate, and all the time they had regarded the Government as a good mark for straight-out imposition. It was a pity, but it was correct. Last year the member for Burrum asked him a few questions with regard to the Public Curator's advertising, and he gave an illustration, which could very aptly be given again to-night. The Public Curator's Department asked for a quote from an Ipswich paper. Their quote was—

"Government rates—£93 daily advertisement; £70 thrice weekly; and £52 twice weekly.

"Scale rate—£41 daily advertisement; £29 thrice weekly; and £25 twice weekly."

That is to say, that where they were asked £93 they would get the same for £41; where they were asked £70, Reuters could get it for £29; and thirdly, where they were asked £52, they could get it for £25. They arranged for advertising for the sum of £400, and the contract was exactly the same as for £1,322. He thought that when the country

newspapers realised the position [8.30 p.m.] they would deal with the Government direct, but they recognised that they could not impose on the Government. He had quoted last year the case of cement manufacturers who were similarly imposing on the Commonwealth by all the tenderers tendering a certain price. In the end the Commonwealth Government dealt with only one tenderer, and the contractors found out that the best way to conduct their business was to quote the ordinary business price. When the country papers recognised that the Government Advertising Board was conducted on business lines, and wanted the same space for the same sum of money as private firms, then they would deal differently with the Government and give the proper rates. The Public Curator's Office last year embarked on a rather extensive advertising

Hon. J. A. Fielly.

campaign. It was competing with the Union Trustee Company and the Queensland Trustees. Every newspaper in Queensland wanted to charge the Public Curator's Department an increase of about 20 per cent. for advertising rights, because it was a Government department. The position was intolerable. The Public Curator's Department could not compete with the Queensland Trustees or the Union Trustee Company whilst the various papers in Queensland demanded their "pound of flesh." Consequently, the Government sought to get the business at the rates at which the competing companies were getting it; and, to do so, they had to consult the various agencies in the towns, and they did it successfully. While newspapers existed which wanted to extort money from the Government all the time, the Government must protect itself. They had business concerns like the Savings Bank and the Public Curator's Department which were out in open competition with other branches of business in private life, and they must get the same value for their money, just as the Insurance Department demanded from the newspapers precisely the same rates as given to private companies. If it were impossible to get the rates that private companies got, the Government might as well cease insurance work, and not attempt to extend the insurance office. The position, he admitted, was a deplorable one, but the remedy lay, not in the hands of the Advertising Board, but in the hands of the country and city newspapers. Let them be reasonable, and apply the same treatment to the Government enterprises as they applied to private firms, and a solution of the whole problem would be quickly found. He deplored very much the engagement of any agencies between the supplier and the consumer, but at present it was necessary, and the remedy lay in the hands of the country newspapers and the Press of Queensland.

Colonel RANKIN: He would like to say a word or two in connection with the appointment of the manager for this department. He had heard praise on all sides with regard to the conduct of the department by that officer, and he thought it was wise that the large expenditure in connection with State advertising should be under the control of the most competent man it was possible to obtain. He would like to call attention to one item in the vote with regard to the appointment of a messenger, which had not appeared before, and for which the huge sum of £48 was put down. Did that mean for a year's salary, or was it for only portion of a year? He was sorry to think that the present Government would be a party to employing anybody at the absurd sum of £48 a year. The Government were constantly stating that they were a non-sweating Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He is only a boy, fourteen years of age.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Minister whether it was not a fact that a special man from Sydney had been engaged to do work in connection with Government advertising; and also if Mr. Watson, the Advertising Manager, did not contribute literary work to one of the newspapers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION explained that the new method was an innovation commenced under this Government about eighteen months ago.

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

For example, an advertisement for which £60 was asked for three years ago, under the new method, and through Reuter's Agency, was only £30. There was no compulsion on the part of country newspapers to go to the association. They could go direct to the Advertising Manager if they wished, but they found that it was desirable to go to the agency because it enabled them to keep one account instead of having accounts in different places. It was quite clear that the Government was in duty bound to go to the agents if the agents could give them a low quotation. The gentleman brought up from New South Wales was paid purely on commission, and was doing very good work.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Was there no man in Queensland who could do it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would not say that. In reference to Mr. Watson writing articles for a newspaper, he was doing that work by permission of the Public Service Board.

Question put and passed.

DUNWICH BENEVOLENT ASYLUM.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That £35,871 be granted for "Dunwich Benevolent Asylum." Last year £36,783 was voted, but this year only £35,871 was asked for, making a decrease of £912 on this year's Estimates.

HON. J. TOLMIE pointed out that it had been the practice to remunerate some of the old men and women at Dunwich for performing certain small services about the place by giving them a couple of pounds every quarter or half year. He was told that the Government had seen fit to discontinue that practice, and he wanted to know if that was the case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He understood that the system of making a small payment to the old people for little services which they rendered was still carried on. He knew that in many instances they were very glad to get a little emolument in that way.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The practice is not discontinued?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not yet discontinued.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: But it is to be?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He did not say that it was to be. He had no doubt that in some cases dissatisfaction might be expressed with regard to the amount paid.

Mr. FORSYTH: He noticed that the salaries of the carpenter and plumber had been transferred from the vote for Dunwich to the vote for the Works Department. He thought it would have been better to have left these two items against the Dunwich vote. Why should they be transferred to the Works Department? Nothing had been saved by the transfer. Certainly, the vote for Dunwich was reduced, but the amount went on to another vote. These men were doing just the same work as the baker, the engineer, and the cook, whose salaries were all chargeable to the Dunwich vote. Why should they take the carpenter and plumber, and put them in the Works Department? It made no difference, because they were debiting one department against the other. Another matter he would like some information on was this: He understood that

some of the people in Dunwich, before they went there, received the Commonwealth old age pension. He wanted to find out from the Minister if the people who went into Dunwich still got the old age pension from the Federal Government, or was the money credited to the department. He understood there were some who had been in the habit of getting the old age pension, but preferred to go to Dunwich, where they would be better looked after, and he wanted to find out whether they were allowed to get the pension. He imagined that if they were entitled to get the pension, the amount should go to the credit of the department, because they were being kept by the State instead of by the Federal Government. The expenditure in connection with Dunwich was not increasing rapidly. The amount this year was just about the same as the last couple of years. In 1914-15 it amounted to £7,000 less than was spent last year. No doubt the Hon. the Minister would tell them that the reason for that was the higher cost of material and provisions. But they always understood when the old age pension scheme came into operation in 1908 or 1909 there would be a great saving in the vote for Dunwich. He noticed that in 1907-8 the aggregate amount spent for Dunwich was about £60,000, and the next year, because of the Federal Government's action, the amount was reduced to no less than £34,000. Now it is not decreasing very much or increasing very much. Looking at the report he found there were about forty-eight people less in Dunwich than a year ago. He thought that was rather a good thing, because while it was a good thing to have a resort of that sort for the benefit of those old people, he thought it was a good thing that the number of people in that resort should be growing less. That might account for the fact that the amount asked for this year was less than the amount spent last year. He hoped the Minister would give some information in regard to those two questions.

At fifty minutes past 8 o'clock,

Mr. SMITH took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: With regard to the carpenter and plumber who had been taken from the department and handed over to the Works Department, he thought the reason for the change was a very simple and a very good one. The Public Works Department was the department which dealt with buildings, and it had been found that these men were more naturally placed under that department, which could keep proper supervision over them easier than the Home Secretary's Department could.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Is it not a fact that the unions insisted that it should be done, and that they should be paid award rates?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No doubt they were paid award rates, and it was a proper thing that they should be so paid. Were hon. members opposite objecting to their being paid award rates?

Mr. FORSYTH: My question was: Why were they transferred?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The Opposition seem to complain that these men were paid award rates.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: I have no objection to their being paid award rates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The transfer was justifiable. It was a proper thing that the carpenter and the plumber, who did Public Works Department work in reality, should be taken over by that department.

Mr. FORSYTH: Do those two men live down there permanently?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He supposed they did, but the Works Department had control over them, and could send them wherever they liked. This was a benevolent asylum vote, and these men were more properly under the Works Department, which could give them better supervision, because they had inspectors who could control them, give them instructions, and inspect their work. Formerly, they had practically no one to supervise them, and under the new vote they could be properly supervised. With regard to the question as to whether the Federal authorities paid for the keep of old age pensioners, the facts were that the State paid 2s. towards the keep, and received 8s., the balance, from the Federal Government.

Mr. ROBERTS: He took it that what they got from the Commonwealth was 8s. and the inmate himself was allowed the 2s. What he would like to know was the amount the State got for the last twelve months on account of the inmates at Dunwich who were Commonwealth pensioners. He supposed it was in the Treasurer's Statement somewhere, but he could not see it in the report. There must be a large number of men and women in Dunwich who were old-age pensioners, and he would like to know the amount paid to the State. With regard to the carpenter and plumber, he understood that this was a new departure putting all tradesmen in the Works Department. He differed from that procedure. He thought the Home Secretary, in passing those men off to the Works Department, was not going to get as efficient and cheap work at the institution. There was no question of paying the men a lesser wage or less than the union wage, but his contention was that, in a large place like Dunwich, there was ample work for a carpenter all the year round. If he was going to be tacked on to the Works Department he would probably be treated as a casual, and would get work there for a month and then go on somewhere else and another carpenter would be sent to Dunwich, and those men would be paid for going to the work and coming back from the work. In these large Government institutions there was any amount of work for those men. There was a doctor there, a superintendent in charge who was fully competent to know what work was necessary and to see that it was done, and he thought the department was making a great mistake. Whether it was at the demand of the unions he did not know, but, from a departmental point of view, he thought it was a mistake to pass these men over to the Works Department. With regard to the question put by the leader of the Opposition, he was inclined to think—and it seemed serious to say it—that the Minister had been misinformed. He (Mr. Roberts) told the House about three weeks ago he made a visit to Dunwich and the men complained that certain sums of money were being stopped. Eight men altogether received sums of £2, £2 10s. or £3 a month doing odd jobs assisting the carpenter and plumber, and

Mr. Roberts.]

they felt rather aggrieved that these sums were stopped. He went to the Home Secretary's Department, and was told that no provision was made for paying these men. He then went to the Works Department and asked the Under Secretary for Works what provision he was making and whether these men had been passed over to that department; and he said no—they were only dealing with tradesmen. Now the Minister said to-night that those men were still getting those sums of money, and he thought before the vote went through they should know definitely. Either the department had misinformed him, or else to-night they had misinformed the Minister in charge of the Estimates. They told him (Mr. Roberts) deliberately that the amount of money—£2 to £3 per month—had been stopped, and the Works Department said they were not going to pay the men. They were only recognising tradesmen, and were going to have nothing to do with old dead-beats. They were told to-night that those sums of money were still being paid.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: My information is that they are being paid for casual work.

Question put.

Mr. ROBERTS: He was not satisfied. Someone had misled him or the Minister, and he wanted to know where they were.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He understood that the matter affected only about half a dozen inmates, who were assisting artisans. He was not speaking merely of those men.

Mr. ROBERTS: The leader of the Opposition was.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No; he was referring to the system of giving payments to casual workers, not to those assisting artisans. He referred

[9 p.m.] to inmates who were doing little odd jobs outside the asylum altogether—just intermittent work; incidental work. The hon. member for East Toowoomba referred to half a dozen or eight men who were assisting the artisans. That might be so, but the statement he (Mr. Hardacre) made applied to those doing general work.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Minister said that the inmates to whom he referred merely comprised a few. It appeared to him that there were nearly as many as those he called the casual workers. He was fully aware of the position. He had been down there, and he was inclined to think that he knew more than the Minister in charge of the Estimates. The Home Secretary, or whoever was responsible for the reduction, had not acted fairly to those old men. They were doing good service to the institution, and they looked upon their pay as a means by which they got a few luxuries. He regretted to find that one of the first acts of the Labour Government, who had pleaded for the old inmates at Dunwich, was to take away their smoke money and their chance of their getting a ride in the trams if they came to town.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The statement of the hon. member was not correct, because they still paid those men. They were far more than the number the hon. member mentioned. There were woodmen, sanitary men, cleaners,

laundrymen, and others. When he had been down there himself a man was sent to chop wood a mile away from the settlement.

Mr. ROBERTS: You would not give him £2 a month to chop wood, surely!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He would not be out all day or perhaps he would only be out one day in a week. The system had not stopped. The hon. member referred to half a dozen men who assisted artisans.

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION moved—That £16,366 be granted for "Electoral Registration." Last year the amount was only £7,990, so that there was an increase of £8,376. He understood that this year preparations for the elections were being made, which accounted for the increase.

Mr. SWAYNE (Mirani): On 25th July last he asked the Minister what were the arrangements to enable Queenslanders on active service to vote at the next Federal election. The answer was—

"Adequate arrangements will be made in order that soldiers may record their votes at next general election."

He thought they were entitled to an answer to the question as it was a most important matter. Between 40,000 and 50,000 of the flower of their young Queenslanders were at the front serving their country, and when they asked what arrangements were being made to enable them to exercise a right to which they were entitled, they met with a refusal. Under such circumstances, was it any wonder that the Government were suspected of double dealing?

The PREMIER: What is there in that answer to arouse suspicion—only a diseased mind?

Mr. SWAYNE: Because no answer was made. He asked, "What arrangements are made?" And the Minister said that "Arrangements will be made." His question was what the arrangements were.

The PREMIER: You might as well ask what the date of the election is going to be and because we do not tell you you would be suspicious.

Mr. SWAYNE: That was absurd; there was no comparison between the two things. The arrangements should be made now.

The PREMIER: Arrangements will be made in plenty of time for the elections.

Mr. SWAYNE: It would take some months to carry out the arrangements and the thing had to be set on foot in good time. Why could not the Minister tell them whether the same arrangements would be made as last time, or that others would be framed? According to hon. members opposite, members of the Opposition were not entitled to any information at all. Under the circumstances, was it any wonder that they were suspicious? There were 40,000 or 50,000 votes concerned, and yet the Home Secretary absolutely refused to give any information as to what arrangements would be made to enable those votes to be cast. The relatives of those who had gone to the front were entitled to that information, and Queensland was entitled to it, and he hoped the Government would rectify the mistake they had made and give the information.

[Mr. Roberts.]

HON. J. TOLMIE: After the very indignant attitude the Premier had adopted towards the hon. member for Mirani, it was with fear and trembling that he (Mr. Tolmie) ventured to ask a question or two from the Minister in charge of the Estimates. As a matter of fact he was going to ask on what date the elections would take place?

THE PREMIER: You will be advised in due course.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He hoped the hon. gentleman would give them that information, so that they could make proper arrangements. Another question he desired to ask was: Would the Government take adequate means to have a purification of the rolls before the next elections took place? He was going through his own roll the other day and he found—

Mr. POLLOCK: Some Labour voters there.

HON. J. TOLMIE: There were some Labour voters there, and he always expected there would be some. It was not the Labour voters that was concerning him at the present time, because he believed they would use a large amount of common sense on this occasion and give him their support. (Laughter.) His point was that the roll was not as clean as it might be. He knew of one case where a man had been dead for the last five years, and his name still remained on the roll. His son had been dead for at least two years, and his name was still on the roll. Then he knew of a considerable number of cases where names were on the roll when they should not be on the roll at the present time; and his roll was only a sample of all the rolls in Queensland.

THE PREMIER: I know of cases where people are very much alive, and their names are not on the roll.

HON. J. TOLMIE: They could not be very much alive politically if their names were not on the roll. He agreed with the Premier that those names should go on the roll, and he was quite sure that the hon. gentleman agreed with him that those names which should not be on the roll should be taken off.

THE PREMIER: There is no danger of dead men voting.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He had known votes to be recorded in the names of dead men before to-day. It was in the interests of all parties that a purification of the rolls should take place.

Mr. VOWLES: He had had a look through his roll, and he found the same as the leader of the Opposition had found—that there were names there which should have been taken off two years ago. He knew of whole families who had left Queensland for New South Wales some time ago and their names were still on the roll. There was no machinery under the present Act by which an objector could have those names removed, the only person who could object being the returning officer. He also wished to point out that section 19, subsection (2) of the Elections Act of 1915 dealt with charitable institutions. As to what was the correct definition of charitable institutions he was at a loss to know. Under that section the inmates of the sanatorium who came to his district were registered on his roll, and in addition he had on his roll all the Dunwich patients who originally belonged to his

district. He had pointed the matter out to the Electoral Registrar, and also to the secretary of the sanatorium, because he was perfectly sure that he could successfully object to those inmates voting for his district, because they had no right to be on his roll, and as a result they would be disfranchised for their own district. He understood that the secretary of the sanatorium claimed that the inmates were entitled to vote for his district, and as a certain amount of political engineering was going on, he thought it only right that the position should be determined, so that those people should not be disfranchised. As far as he was concerned, he would object to them voting for that district when they had no right to be on the roll at all. They could only be registered for the district to which they belonged.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are taking exception to a sick man's vote.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not care if fifty times as many were on his roll. It would not affect him at all. The object of that section was to provide that the inmates of Dunwich should have a vote, and it was considered it would not be a fair thing for them all to vote for the one electorate. The same thing applied to the sanatorium at Dalby, and he was bringing the matter up so that nobody would be taken by surprise, and so that those sick men should get a vote instead of being deprived of it.

Mr. GRAYSON: Forty thousand people had left Queensland for the front, and ample provision should be made to enable those soldiers to vote at the next election. Members on the Government side claimed that 60 or 70 per cent. of those soldiers were unionists.

THE PREMIER: Mr. Holman said fully two-thirds were unionists.

Mr. GRAYSON: If that were so, then it was the duty of the Government to make ample provision for those unionists to record their votes at the next election. The answer given by the Minister in connection with the matter was somewhat indefinite, and it was not clear as to what means they intended to adopt to enable them to vote. He was personally interested in many of those young men who had gone to fight for their country, and he would like those young men to be given an opportunity of recording their votes at the next election.

THE PREMIER: Your desire will be gratified.

Mr. GRAYSON: There was another matter to which he would like to refer. He noticed during the last month or six weeks that policemen were going round from house to house—particularly at the hotels and boarding-houses—collecting names to place upon the rolls.

THE PREMIER: Purifying the rolls.

Mr. GRAYSON: He had no objection to that. Every facility should be given to every elector to have his name placed upon the roll, irrespective of what his political opinions were; but at the same time—and he was not going to blame the Government for this—he did not think there was the same precaution taken in getting names in country electorates upon the rolls that there was taken in regard to the city. The sergeant and the acting sergeant in the different centres in the Cunningham electorate used

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every means to try and get names upon the electoral roll. At the same time he contended that, on the eve of a general election, it was the duty of the Home Department to render assistance to the sergeants of police in the different districts in order to get every available man on the electoral roll. It was utterly impossible for the constables in charge of the different country centres to visit every house in the electorate or the particular district. Now, that was not a party matter; it interested the Labour party equally as much as it did the Liberal party. Every man's and every woman's name should be placed upon the roll before a general election—and on the right roll. In his opinion it was a matter in which the Government should expend a few hundred pounds in country districts. There were a good many new people who went to country districts and forgot all about having their names placed upon the roll for that district. He hoped the Government would not forget what he had said regarding the soldiers. Those young men took a great interest in Queensland politics.

Mr. COLLINS: Especially Labour politics.

Mr. GRAYSON: He was not speaking about Labour or Liberal. Judging by the votes that had been recorded during the last Federal election, it seemed to him that a large majority of our soldiers were in favour of the National party. (Government dissent.)

Mr. FREE: They were faked.

Mr. GRAYSON: He had no hesitation in saying in regard to the soldiers who had volunteered and had gone to the front that if they were enabled to record their votes, there would be a large majority of them in favour of National candidates. (Government dissent.)

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: With regard to the roll and the possibilities of purifying it, if the State rolls were not what they ought to be, it was not the fault of that Government, and it was not the fault of the Act and the provisions of the Act that they had made for the control and regulation of elections.

Mr. GRAYSON: I didn't blame them.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: He was not referring to the hon. member for Cunningham. He was referring to the leader of the Opposition and the member for Dalby—particularly the member for Dalby, who, being a lawyer, ought to doubly know the laws of his own State. Seeing that hon. members were here when this Government passed the present Act, they ought to know that every provision had been made for cleansing the roll. By interjection to the hon. member, he had stated that he still had the same right to object to any name on the roll and get it removed.

Mr. FORSYTH: You cannot remove it.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Possibly he did not understand the meaning of English.

Mr. FORSYTH: I don't think you do.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Possibly he did not; but he would read section 31 of the Elections Act of 1915, which stated—

“Any name on a roll may be objected to by objection in writing lodged with or made by an electoral registrar: provided that a sum of 5s. shall be deposited in respect of each objection lodged by any person other than the electoral registrar or a prescribed officer, to be forfeited to His Majesty if the objection is held by the

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electoral registrar to be frivolous. The objection shall be in the prescribed form and be signed by an elector registered on the same roll, or by the electoral registrar or by a prescribed officer. It is the duty of each electoral registrar to lodge an objection in writing setting forth the ground of such objection in respect of any name which he has reason to believe ought not to be retained on the roll.”

Mr. VOWLES: Can you compel him to do it?

Mr. FREE: There is the Act.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The leader of the Opposition said he knew of people who were dead and whose names still were on the roll and had not been removed. The hon. member for Dalby said practically the same thing—that there were names of people on the roll who were away in New South Wales, and there was no provision for removing them.

Mr. VOWLES: The Principal Electoral Registrar agrees with me, too.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: He did not think there was any getting away from that provision.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot compel them to take it off.

Mr. PETERSON: The registrar told me he could.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The Act says—

“The objection shall be in the prescribed form and shall be signed by an elector registered on the same roll or by the electoral registrar.”

Did it not say plainly he could lodge an objection?

Mr. VOWLES: You can lodge an objection, but you cannot compel him to deal with it.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It would be dealt with in the revision court.

Mr. VOWLES: No, it will not.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: It must be.

Mr. VOWLES: The Principal Electoral Registrar does that, but nobody else can.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: He thought that that regulation was very clear. The only difference between that Act and the previous Act was that they could not go to an electoral registrar under the “cush” and tell him a number of men had gone out of the district and to remove them. That, perhaps, was what the hon. gentleman wanted to get at, and which they wished to obtain when another Government was sitting there.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot compel them.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: What nonsense the hon. gentleman talks. If an objection was lodged and a revision court came out, the electoral registrar was bound to remove them. If he did not, the hon. gentleman had his remedy under the Act.

Mr. FORSYTH: What is the remedy; tell us the remedy.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: To go down to the court and see that the name was dealt with. That was provided in that Act. The hon. gentleman knew it perfectly well. He was not going to go right through the Act.

Mr. FORSYTH: The hon. gentleman did not know the Act at all. What was the position? The electoral registrar himself could not take a name off the roll unless under certain conditions. If an elector had left his own district and had gone to an-

other district, and as he had not taken the precaution to have his name transferred from the district from which he came to the district in which he was, his name could not be taken off the roll either by the electoral registrar or by anybody else. That was the worst Electoral Act they ever had had in Queensland. He had discussed that question with the Chief Electoral Registrar. He knew of hundreds of names of people on the roll in his electorate who had not been living there for years; and as a matter of fact they could not take them off. Some of them had been on the roll for ten years and they could not get them off the roll until they had gone on to another roll. As soon as they went on to another roll they could be put off the roll for the district which they had left; but if a [9.30 p.m.] man or woman neglected to go off the roll for the place they had left and to go on the roll for the place they went to live, no one—not even the electoral registrar—could take their names off the former roll. He had discussed this question with the electoral registrar, who had told him that there was no power to take the names off the roll. If they could produce proof that a man had left Queensland, he would be taken off the roll.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Have you got any clause in the Act which says that a name cannot be taken off the roll?

Mr. FORSYTH: Yes, section 31 subsection (3). No one could be taken off the roll who had left the district until such time as he was transferred to another roll.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Suppose he leaves the State?

Mr. FORSYTH: If they could prove that a man had left the State they could have his name removed from the roll, but he was speaking of people still living in Queensland and who had gone to another electorate. If a man under those conditions had neglected to go on another roll, there were no possible means of taking him off the roll for the district he had left. Hundreds of men in his own electorate had gone away from the district for years, and there was no possible hope of taking their names off the roll, because they could not prove that they had left Queensland. The present Act was no good at all. It did not purify the rolls because it could not purify them.

He wished to refer to the enormous increase of expenditure in connection with the department last year. The amount put down on the Estimates was £7,990, but no less than £23,257 had been spent.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We had a referendum.

Mr. FORSYTH: That referendum should never have been brought on; the money was actually wasted. The Government did not care what the expenditure was in any department, so long as it suited their own ends.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is a very rash statement.

Mr. FORSYTH: For railway fares, freights, printing, stationery, etc., £4,000 had been put down last year, while the Government had spent £8,219. A considerable amount of the money was spent in connection with the elections. Under the system adopted, the Government had to employ more men to go through the various electorates to find out the people who had shifted from one electorate to another. All this

meant a lot of expense. The old system was more simple and efficient, and, in his estimation, infinitely more honest.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The objection of the hon. member to the Electoral Act was not that the names had not been removed from the roll, but that names could not be removed easily enough.

Mr. FORSYTH: No, I do not mean that at all. I only want people on the roll who are entitled to be on.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: The Act was plain. Clause 32 said—

“(2.) Where the electoral registrar is satisfied that the ground of objection stated in any objection lodged by a prescribed officer is not a good ground of objection, he may dismiss the objection, in which case no notice of the objection need be given to the person objected to.

“(3.) An objection on the ground that a person does not live in a district for which he is enrolled shall be deemed not to be good unless it alleges that the person objected to—

(a) Does not live in the district, and does not live in Queensland; or

(b) Does not live in the district, and has obtained enrolment for some other district.”

That was a very wise provision. The hon. member had said that electors had gone to New South Wales, and that there was no provision whereby they could be removed from the roll. That was proved to be wrong, because the Act made provision. There was a provision that anyone who moved from one electoral district to another could be removed from the roll of the district which he had left.

Mr. FORSYTH: Not until he is enrolled in another district.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: What hurt the hon. gentleman was that he could not remove that voter in the way that his agents did a couple of years ago—before the last election—at North Pine and Bundaberg. That was the hon. gentleman's trouble. They knew that these men left their homes to go away temporarily, and they wanted to put them off the roll. If they could prove that the worker had left his place of abode permanently, in nine times out of ten they would know where he went to, and they could find out if he was enrolled on another roll. In the old days, if a voter shifted from one street to another in the same electorate, and his politics were known, then the house and land agents and various landlords found that he had shifted, and his name was removed from the roll. Now an objection had to be lodged in writing, and a fee of 5s. had to accompany the objection to prove that their objection was a valid one. Another thing which the unscrupulous agents did not like was subclause (4) of section 32—

“(4.) The person objected to may, orally or in writing, in the prescribed manner, answer the objection.”

Then section 33 went on to say—

“(1.) On receipt of the answer of the person objected to, or after the expiration of forty-two days from the posting of the notice, or, if lists of persons objected to are published or advertised pursuant to the regulations after the expiration of a period fixed by the regulations, the electoral registrar shall determine the objection, and if it appears that

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"the person objected to is not qualified to be enrolled on the roll, shall strike out his name."

This was the section which hurt the hon. gentleman—

"(2.) If any objection is held by the electoral registrar to be frivolous, the person objected to shall be entitled to a reasonable allowance not exceeding £5, and the electoral registrar shall award such sum to be paid by the objector, and in default of payment such sum may be recovered by the electoral registrar in any civil court as a debt due by the objector, and when so recovered shall be paid to the person objected to."

That was the whole trouble. That safeguarded the right of an elector to his right to vote for the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly. The agents of hon. gentlemen opposite could not get on with the same roll-stuffing and roll-erasing tactics which used to prevail some time ago. The hon. gentleman knew very well that that was a very safe section. If they knew a man had left the district, in nine cases out of ten they would know where he went to, and they would soon see if he was enrolled on another roll. It was only a question of communicating with the electoral registrar to see that. The people of Queensland would recognise that the Act was a fair one, and safeguarded their interests, and prevented the unscrupulous tactics that at one period and another prevailed in the State for the conduct of elections.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: A question had been asked as to whether regulations had been made in connection with the soldiers' votes for the next election. The regulations had not yet been made. The matter would be dealt with at some future time, and it was impossible to give an answer as to what the regulations were going to be. Adequate provision would be made for the soldiers to vote, because the Government were not afraid of the soldiers' vote. The hon. member for Dalby raised the question about the votes of inmates of charitable institutions, as to whether they would vote for the electorate where the institution was situated or whether they would vote for the electorate from which they came. That was purely a matter for the electoral registrar. The electoral registrar was giving full consideration to the matter now. The hon. member for Cunningham asked that the rolls in country districts should be attended to. Instructions had been given to the police, and steps were being taken to see that the police did their work in that respect. Steps were taken to see that the fullest vigilance was exercised, and that the electoral rolls were attended to in country districts. The Act compels every person to enrol his name, and the police were putting the names on the roll now. When the time came, they would have a full roll. The Government were not afraid of a full roll, but, on the contrary, were anxious to see a full roll. Under the present system of electoral registration, it was the duty of the electoral registrar to transfer persons who had removed from one electorate to another to the roll for the new district in which they resided, and in this way to preserve the elector's rights.

At five minutes to 10 o'clock,
The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

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Mr. CORSER: He was glad to have the assurance that soldiers were going to have a vote. Soldiers had not yet had a vote under the Elections Act of 1915. The last referendum was held under the provisions of the Parliamentary Bills Referendum Act of 1903, and there was no machinery to give votes to soldiers.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Yes, there is; you read the Act.

Mr. CORSER: Section 100 of the Elections Act provided that—

"The Governor in Council may from time to time make regulations providing for all or any purposes, whether general or to meet particular cases, that may be convenient for the administration of this Act or that may be necessary or expedient to carry out the objects and purposes of this Act, including provisions for all matters enabling electors absent from Queensland to exercise the right to vote either personally or by persons nominated by them for that purpose, and, where there may be in this Act no provision or no sufficient provision in respect of any matter or thing necessary or expedient to give effect to this Act, providing for and supplying such omission or insufficiency."

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Read section 10.

Mr. CORSER: Section 10 provided for the protection of soldiers on active service, and was intended to protect soldiers from having their names removed from the roll, but it was under section 100 that regulations might be framed giving persons absent from Queensland a vote. Under section 100 persons who had resided in Queensland, but now lived in New South Wales or Western Australia, might vote personally or by persons nominated by them for that purpose. Up to the present time no regulations had been drawn up to make it possible for soldiers to vote. The Premier had stated earlier in the session that such regulations had not been completed. It was to be hoped that they would be completed at an early date. He trusted that the Government would, at the same time, make provision whereby soldiers who had become twenty-one years of age since they left the State would be enabled to be registered as electors.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: That is provided for in section 10, which uses the words "any right that has accrued or will accrue."

Mr. CORSER: If a soldier had a right to be enrolled, that right would necessitate his making a claim, and he hoped that the Premier would see that no technicality would be allowed to stand in the way of such persons being enrolled. With regard to persons being allowed to object to the name of anyone on the roll on payment of a fee of 5s., he thought the electoral registrar should be able to decide on his own motion whether a person was entitled to have his name retained on any roll. The whole trouble with regard to clean or dirty rolls was due to the fact that there was an error in the claim form. Many electors were on several rolls, so that, although a man was registered on a particular roll, it was impossible to know what other roll his name might appear on.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You cannot be on more than one roll.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, a man might be on three or four rolls. When he left his electorate he forgot all about his State electoral

votc. and perhaps in a month's time he was "questioned" by somebody. Some months afterwards he might be filling in [10 p.m.] an application for a vote. He saw a question, "Are you on any other roll?" or "What electoral roll are you on in the State?" He did not know one roll from another, and he stated that he did not know, whereas if the question were in the form, "What roll were you on last?" it would have saved a great amount of trouble. Under the present system he mixed up the State and Commonwealth rolls, but if they could provide for every applicant answering such a question as he had suggested they would have the machinery for a perfect roll. Immediately a man went out of an electorate, he stated in his new electorate the electorate he had left, and the name automatically disappeared from the old roll. He thought that was the crux of the whole matter, and a point that the Minister might consider.

Mr. ROBERTS: The hon. member for Fitzroy suggested that they could have the qualifications of an elector inquired into on lodging a deposit of 5s. He had been glancing through the East Toowoomba roll, and, roughly, the number of electors who had left the State to his knowledge was 300. Immediately he lodged objections it would be said that he was "Bulcocking" the rolls. Since 1907, when he came into the House, he had never raised an objection or sent a report to the registrar in respect of any man who had left his electorate, although he had a thorough knowledge of his electorate, and he did not propose to do it now.

Mr. H. L. HARTLEY: Perhaps an agent did it for you.

Mr. ROBERTS: No agent did it for him. He discussed the matter with the electoral registrar only the other day, and he asked him to give him the information, but he did not do so, and he had no intention of doing so. He knew that those men had left, and he knew also that hundreds of other men and women had left. What he was concerned about was what was a reasonable time to allow after people had left the electorate or the houses in which they had been tenants.

Mr. LAND: One month.

Mr. ROBERTS: He had people who had left the electorate two or three years.

Mr. LAND: They can be fined.

Mr. ROBERTS: He did not know that they could be fined. If the hon. member would give the necessary information perhaps it would get them out of a difficulty. The registrar must lose sight of the large numbers who left the State, and there had been no proper provision for checking the rolls for the last two years. With regard to the soldiers, he was afraid that if they were not very careful some of them would lose their right to vote. Suppose that the police, with every good intention—with no intention of getting anybody off the roll—called at a house and asked who were there, and got the names of John and Elizabeth Smith. The other people had left the district altogether perhaps, and if they found two other people down for that same house they would probably take them off the roll. The husband being away, the wife had probably gone to live with her mother or a friend, and in course of time would get on another roll. Under those circumstances he

was just afraid that they would lose the soldier who was away. He hoped the Home Secretary would consider the matter. In passing, he wished to congratulate the Home Secretary on his return to the Chamber after his little tour. (Hear, hear!) He was sure he looked rather improved, and he hoped that they would get the information they desired first hand.

Then there was the question of the young lad who left Australia under the age of twenty-one. He believed that the Government were anxious to do the fair thing, and it was a matter they could deal with without party prejudice. They ought to come to a decision on the matter. They knew that the elections must reasonably come within the next seven months. They knew the difficulties that existed in doing things across the sea, and he thought that the arrangements should be published as soon as possible, so that lads who had left on active service and had attained the age of twenty-one since they had been away would know what it was necessary to do in order to become enrolled. He took it they would be entitled to be enrolled for the district where they resided previous to leaving. He took it that the name of any soldier who had left Australia would be retained on the roll?

Mr. DUNSTAN: If you show too much eagerness in purifying the rolls according to your method, you are likely to have a lot of soldiers' names removed from the rolls.

Mr. ROBERTS: He objected to the hon. member saying "his method." He had taken no steps to have names taken off the roll, but he had taken every precaution to see that those who were entitled to vote were not disfranchised.

Question put and passed.

HEALTH.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buanda*) moved—That £15,618 be granted for "Health." He understood that arrangements had been made to adjourn at half-past 10 o'clock, and although he was quite prepared to go on he would keep the compact entered into. He would not make any comments on the Estimates, but would be prepared to answer any questions put to him.

Mr. VOWLES: From what he could gather from the newspapers a retiring councillor in connection with the Sherwood Shire Council was unopposed at the elections, but his nomination was found to be informal as it was not lodged until a few minutes after 4 o'clock. The result was that there was no appointment, and it was necessary for the Home Department to nominate some person to fill the vacancy. A meeting of the council took place immediately after the difficulty arose, and a majority of the councillors favoured the reappointment of the retiring councillor, but for some remarkable reason that man was not "Gazetted" as the appointee, and a gentleman who held very strong political opinions, who was secretary of the Workers' Political Organisation, and who had never had anything to do with the local authority, was "Gazetted" by the Governor in Council to fill that vacancy. It struck him that that was an unwarranted act.

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The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member's remarks are hardly applicable to this vote.

Mr. VOWLES: The health authorities had a certain control over local authorities.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot deal with that matter on this vote.

Mr. VOWLES: He claimed that it was a matter that came within the scope of the vote, because the Commissioner of Health was the man who controlled, under the Health Act, the members of local authorities. There was some connection between that vote and the local authorities. However, he did not want to press it, but it was a matter that should be explained by the Minister. The same thing had happened in North Queensland. Then, again, in the Sherwood Shire there had been an interference by the Home Department with that local authority in connection with a contract. A resolution was come to by a certain local authority to give a contractor an extra sum of £100 on account of an increase in wages, but the department interfered and rescinded the resolution by proclamation, with the result that instead of the shire losing £100, as they were prepared to do, it cost them hundreds of pounds. If the department was forced into that position, then there must be some power behind the Minister compelling him to do it.

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member had referred to a matter that had been dealt with by his predecessor, and it was somewhat belated to bring the matter up now. All questions of that sort were left in the hands of the department, and he was perfectly satisfied that any appointment by the department, either by himself or by his predecessor, had been fully justified. As to the question of a council having to pay an extra sum of money to a sanitary contractor; when the matter was brought before him he had considered that it would give an undue preference to a contractor who tendered too low, and consequently he thought he was justified in rescinding the resolution so that fresh tenders could be called.

Mr. VOWLES: It was very disastrous to the shire.

The HOME SECRETARY: That might have been, but it might have been advantageous. If he thought the shire would have been put to a disadvantage he certainly would not have done so, but he had in his mind that it would be a fair thing that all should have a chance of retendering.

Question put and passed.

HOSPITALS AND CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £221,421 be granted for "Hospitals and Charitable Institutions." That was an increase of £54,705 on the amount voted last year. As hon. members could see where the increase came in, he would not dilate on the matter, but was prepared to answer any questions asked.

Mr. VOWLES pointed out that at the Jubilee Sanatorium at Dalby the head nurse got £80 a year, one certificated nurse only £50, and six assistant nurses £40 a year each, while the housemaid and scullery maid got £52 a year. Those salaries appeared to be out of all proportion. These nurses, who worked amongst men and women who were

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in the last stages of decay and took their lives in their hands, should be paid more than the scullery maids. There were two milkmen (ex-patients) at £65 each, and three labourers at £65 each. Dr. Stewart had established the system in vogue, and he understood Dr. Kilpatrick was carrying it out to a greater extent, by which they induced ex-patients to remain and work on the farm. They were given an opportunity of earning something for themselves as a sort of outdoor patient. He could not help noticing, when he visited the institution at the same time as the Home Secretary, that the place was in a disgraceful condition as far as the garden was concerned. They had then also visited the convent, where one of the sisters was able to produce vegetables for the whole of the school, but two men at the sanatorium were not able to show any result at all. What class of work were the labourers doing? They were cheap men, as they were only receiving £65 a year. The Home Secretary, when he went out, was just as much disgusted with the state of affairs as he (Mr. Vowles) was, and brought about a speedy change. The public would be interested to know what notice the department was taking of the suggestions of the medical officers for the benefit of ex-patients.

The HOME SECRETARY said that Dr. Stewart's suggestions had been fully carried out, and the present doctor had made a recommendation that ex-patients should be formed into a small colony, and remain there until they fully recovered, which they were endeavouring to carry out. They were experimenting with tents, and if that was a success, they would go farther with the matter. The labourers referred to were ex-patients, who wished to remain, and he felt certain that they would fully recover by staying on. With regard to the nurses, the foundation of a training was laid there. The nurses were not worked as hard as they were in general hospitals. He recognised that the nurses should not only get good accommodation and wages, but should work reasonable hours. The wages at the Dalby Sanatorium were higher than they were in subsidised or general hospitals. He would only be too pleased to increase the remuneration as he had done at the Diamantina some two years ago, but no complaints had been made by the nurses on account of inadequate pay. He felt sure that he could satisfy the hon. member for Dalby on all the points he had raised.

Question put and passed.

INSANITY.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £135,737 be granted for "Insanity." There was an increase of £17,560 on last year's vote. Hon. members would recognise that wages had been considerably increased, and that made up the additional amount provided for.

Question put and passed.

LAZARET.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £4,824 be granted for "Lazaret." There was an increase of £220 in the vote, made up largely by the increased cost of maintenance of the institution.

Question put and passed.

At half-past 10 o'clock.
The CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order No. 306, I will now leave the chair, and make my report to the House.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

MANY PEAKS TO NEW CANNINDAH RAILWAY EXTENSION.

LEAVE OF MEMBER TO ATTEND COUNCIL SELECT COMMITTEE.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council requesting leave for Mr. George Carter to attend and give evidence before a Select Committee appointed to consider and report upon the Many Peaks to New Cannindah Railway extension.

The PREMIER moved—

“That leave be given to the hon. member to attend and be examined if he sees fit, and that such leave be communicated to the Legislative Council by message in the usual form.”

Question put and passed.

STATE PRODUCE AGENCY BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Legislative Council returning this Bill with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the consideration of the message be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

FARM PRODUCE AGENTS BILL.

MESSAGE FROM THE COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from the Council returning this Bill with amendments, in which they invited the concurrence of the Assembly.

Ordered that the consideration of the message be made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

HOME SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.

LOCK HOSPITALS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £200 be granted for “Lock Hospitals.”

HON. J. TOLMIE asked what was the reason they were going on with the consideration of Supply.

The PREMIER: We are carrying out the arrangement made by your deputy on Friday last.

HON. J. TOLMIE pointed out that the Standing Order said that Supply should close at half-past 10 o'clock.

The PREMIER: So it did close at that hour, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour. The Home Secretary's Estimates were not finished by half-past 10 o'clock, and I am giving the Opposition an

opportunity of finishing them. (After a pause.) The hon. gentleman seems to misunderstand.

HON. J. TOLMIE asked the Premier to explain the position.

The PREMIER: The matter was easy of explanation. An arrangement was made on Friday night—in consequence of the Government agreeing to adjourn at 6 o'clock—that that day should be counted as one day for Supply; and it was further arranged that the Railway Estimates would be finished on the next sitting day, together with either the Home Secretary's Estimates or Chief Secretary's Estimates. He was carrying out that arrangement—to finish the Home Secretary's Estimates to-day. In order that the arrangement should be fully carried out, the Estimates should have been finished at half-past 10 o'clock. The Opposition had failed to comply with their agreement. But, in order to give them an opportunity of fulfilling it, the Home Secretary moved that the resumption of the Committee be made an Order for a later hour. That motion was carried by the House, and that was why they were resuming the discussion of Supply. If the leader of the Opposition had any reasonable suggestion to make, he would be only too willing to listen to him and come to an understanding, if he so desired. They were taking the Home Secretary's Estimates in order to carry out what he understood to be an honourable arrangement with the Opposition.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Personally, he did not make any arrangement last Friday, but he understood that the House adjourned at 6 o'clock, because members on the Government side were anxious to get away.

The PREMIER: That is not correct.

The TREASURER: Your “Whip” made the arrangement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That was what induced the Premier to close down at 6 o'clock on Friday. A statement appeared in “Hansard” which showed the arrangement that was made with the Premier by Mr. Macartney.

The PREMIER: I tell you distinctly that I did not want to adjourn at 6 o'clock on Friday. I wanted to adjourn at half-past 10 o'clock.

HON. J. TOLMIE: Mr. Macartney, when the Premier spoke on this matter, said “We to be allowed reasonable discussion.”

The PREMIER: That was subsequent to the arrangement.

HON. J. TOLMIE: That was when the House was adjourning, and nothing else could be done. More than half the time this afternoon had been taken up by supporters of the Government in discussing matters of little importance, and that naturally limited the time at the disposal of the members of the Opposition. If the discussion had been limited—as they anticipated it would have been—they would have been able to carry out the compact and have saved an hour and a-half of discussion. The Opposition had endeavoured to carry out the arrangement made to the fullest possible extent, even though the Government had placed before them the Estimates for the two heaviest departments in the service, and he considered that the action of the Government was a piece of sharp practice.

The PREMIER: The sharp practice comes from your side.

Hon. J. Tolmie.]

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He had expressed his candid opinion on the matter. He was not going to object to this item going through, but he objected to the method by which the Premier had endeavoured to attain his ends.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): If the leader of the Opposition had said at the commencement of the sitting that he repudiated the arrangement that was made, the Government would have known where they were. As a matter of fact, the suggestion to adjourn at 6 o'clock last Friday came from the Opposition side of the House. The Government had no idea of adjourning at that hour until the "Whip" of the Opposition came across the House and said that, if the Government would agree to adjourn at 6 o'clock, the Opposition would undertake at the next sitting to put through the Railway Estimates and the Estimates for the Home Secretary's Department or the Chief Secretary's Department. It was not fair for the leader of the Opposition to suggest that members on the Government side of the House should remain silent and allow members of the Opposition to have all their own way. The members supporting the Government had certainly refrained from speaking quite as much as members of the Opposition. What Mr. Macartney said on the motion for the adjournment of the House on Friday was said after he—on his own volition—had entered into the arrangement which had been mentioned, and if there was anybody who had not "played the game" it was the leader of the Opposition. At the commencement of the sitting the Premier told the hon. gentleman that if he was not satisfied with the arrangement which had been made he was prepared to enter into any reasonable arrangement, and it was surprising that the leader of the Opposition should have taken up the attitude which he had taken up during the whole of the sitting.

Question put and passed.

MEDICAL OFFICERS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £2,596 be granted for "Medical Officers." There was no alteration in this vote.

Question put and passed.

OUTDOOR RELIEF.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £9,446 be granted for "Outdoor Relief." There was a decrease of £2,970 in this vote, which was due to the fact that there was not the demand on the Government Relief Office that there was last year.

Question put and passed.

POLICE.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £308,311 be granted for "Police." There was an increase of £29,585 in this vote, which was largely made up by the increased rates paid to members of the force.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: The salary of the previous Commissioner was £1,000 per annum, but he noticed that the salary of the new Commissioner was £700. He would like to know what was the reason for this discrepancy between the salary of the present occupant of the office and that of his predecessor. In making other appointments the Government had paid in certain cases the full amount given to the former occupants of the offices they had filled, and had in some instances increased the salary considerably.

(*Hon. J. Tolmie.*)

He should like the Minister to give the Committee some information on this matter, and to explain why the office of senior first class inspector had been done away with. He hoped that the Minister would give them some information, because the Police Department was one of which he did not know very much further than his association with the men, and from the highest to the lowest they seemed to do their duty in a satisfactory manner. He noticed also that the forage allowances had been reduced from £10,000 to £8,000. Of course, they were not desirous of increasing estimates at the present time, but, perhaps, some reason could be assigned for the 20 per cent. decrease, because in the country districts the horse was as essential as the man.

The HOME SECRETARY: When the appointment of Commissioner was made, they were not prepared to pay the incoming Commissioner the same salary as the outgoing Commissioner, who was paid an extraordinary advance over his predecessor, and they thought that when the new appointment was made they should come back to what they considered a fair thing, considering that it was an increase to an officer in the service. Nobody recognised the value of the present Commissioner more than he did.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He is not worth as much as an Insurance Commissioner, for instance.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Insurance Commissioner was an officer entirely outside the usual run, an officer who was conducting work that meant a profit to the State. He was not going to undervalue the present Commissioner of Police, but they could not compare the two offices. The question of status had not been altered. With regard to the forage, they estimated that owing to the good season no more than was set down would be required. He was hoping to curtail other expenses, so far as possible, without interfering in any way with the efficiency of the force. The increases referred to applied to non-commissioned officers and men. For some years past there had been a great agitation on the part of the police that they should get the same rate of pay as the men in New South Wales, and from his examination of the forces down South—and when in Adelaide recently the smartness of the Queensland police had been commented upon—he thought that the Queensland men were beyond comparison with those in the other States. He thought they should not put them in the position of receiving less than they received down South.

Question put and passed.

POLICE INVESTMENT BOARD.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £32,000 be granted for "Police Investment Board." It was the same amount as last year.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: He understood that the Government had promised that a Superannuation Act would be passed, and he would like to know whether that would be this session. The police were very dissatisfied with the present position and they hoped that the new Act would place them on a better footing.

The PREMIER: One thing they knew is that they could not get it from your side.

Hon. J. TOLMIE: Perhaps the hon. member would tell them whether it was a fact also that they could not get it from members opposite.

The HOME SECRETARY: No promise was made to the police to the effect stated by the leader of the Opposition. What was promised was that the matter would be considered by the Government, and when the police approached the Chief Secretary they were perfectly satisfied, if they got the increased wages, to leave the superannuation scheme entirely to the Government to consider. Of course, they were all dissatisfied when they did not get all they wanted, but that was the position.

HON. J. TOLMIE: The matter was represented to him in the way he had put it. Members of the police force waited on him as leader of the Opposition, asking [11 p.m.] if he would facilitate the passage of the Bill which they had been promised. With that information, he was anxious to know when the Bill was coming forward so that they might make arrangements to give it full support or otherwise.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would you be prepared to support it?

HON. J. TOLMIE: All he could say was that if the Minister did bring it forward they would endeavour to facilitate its passage.

Question put and passed.

PRISONS.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £32,464 be granted for "Prisons." This was an increase of £170.

HON. J. TOLMIE: He rose for the purpose of saying that he did not intend discussing any further items, in order to enable hon. members on the other side to get away and catch their trains.

The PREMIER: Members on your own side have already gone.

Question put and passed.

REGISTRAR-GENERAL.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £7,935 be granted for "Registrar-General." The vote showed an increase of £511.

Question put and passed.

STATE CHILDREN.

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £129,918 be granted for "State Children." That was an increase of £1,244.

Question put and passed.

STEAMER "OTTER."

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £3,932 be granted for "Steamer 'Otter.'" This was an increase of £293.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES (SUBDIVISION).

The HOME SECRETARY moved—That £19,100 be granted for "Miscellaneous Services (Subdivision)." This vote showed a reduction of £2,700.

Question put and passed.

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

The House adjourned at five minutes past 11 o'clock.