

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 30 MAY 1918

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

PAPERS.

The following papers, laid on the table, were ordered to be printed:—

Additional regulation under the Land Acts, 1910 to 1917.

Regulation under the Closer Settlement Acts, 1906 to 1917.

QUESTIONS.

STATE STATIONS AND STATE BUTCHERS' SHOPS.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) asked the Chief Secretary, or Minister in charge of State butchers' shops—

"1. What is the number of fat cattle from State stations sold to or retailed in State butchers' shops to 30th April, 1918?

"2. Is the report true that 7,000 fat cattle from State stations are being killed and dressed for sale to the Imperial Government at 4½d. per lb. correct?

"3. Are the State meat shops still supplied from the meatworks at 3d. and 3½d. per lb.?

"4. At what date do the Government intend supplying State butchers' shops with beef or mutton from State stations?"

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

"1. Nil.

"2. Arrangements have been made with the Burdekin Meatworks at Townsville to treat up to 7,000 head of prime fat bullocks from Wando Vale and Dotswood State stations. The meat, when treated, will be shipped for the use of the troops of the Imperial Government and our allies.

"3. Yes.

"4. The Government's intentions will be disclosed in due course."

NORTHERN RAILWAY DISPUTE.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Chief Secretary—

"1. Has the case proposed to be referred to Mr. Justice Stringer, of New Zealand, on the subject of the dispute between the Northern Railway employees and the department, arising out of the award of Judge McCawley, been so referred?

"2. Has the decision been received?

"3. If so, what is the purport thereof?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. It has been referred to his Honour Mr. Justice Stringer by both parties in the dispute.

"2 and 3. The result will be publicly announced as soon as it is known."

ADVERTISEMENTS IN "SOLDIER" NEWSPAPER.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*) asked the Home Secretary—

"What sums of money have been paid to the Soldier Newspaper Company for advertising during the last nine months?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*) replied—

"No payments have been made by this department. I shall inquire from the Chief Secretary."

SOLDIERS' INDUSTRIAL INSTITUTE.

Mr. SIZER asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"Seeing that the Soldiers' Industrial Institute has been closed, has the newly appointed manager's appointment been terminated; if not, does he contemplate reopening the institute?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. H. F. Hardacre, *Leichhardt*) replied—

"Certain recommendations have been made which are now under consideration, and the intentions of the Government will be disclosed in due course."

ELECTION STATISTICS.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Will he lay on the table a list of the electorates showing the total number of names on the rolls used at the general elections, and the number of votes recorded in each electorate for the respective candidates?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. T. J. Ryan, *Barcoo*) replied—

"I would ask the hon. gentleman to move for a return, when full particulars will be laid on the table."

MUSTER OF CATTLE ON MOUNT HUTTON.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dulby*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Have the cattle purchased by the Government from Mr. Glasdon, and alleged to be running on Mount Hutton, been mustered yet?"

"2. What number have been so mustered?"

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

"1. A complete muster has not yet been made.

"2. Seven thousand eight hundred and fifty-eight mustered and delivered to 20th February, 1918."

NOTICE OF QUESTION.

CIRCULAR TO CARNARVON ELECTORS.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) gave notice of his intention to ask the Premier a question regarding the issue of a circular to the electors of Carnarvon, in support of the candidature of Mr. R. Bedford, and proceeded to read the circular.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I suggest that when the hon. gentleman asks a question he should not introduce the whole of a letter or circular into it.

Mr. GUNN: I am only quoting parts of it.

The SPEAKER: During the last Parliament I had occasion to edit questions submitted by hon. members. I do not want to do that at all, and I shall not do it if members will prepare their questions in such a way that they can be answered by Ministers. If direct questions are asked, they will not be interfered with, but if a lot of outside matter is introduced—if whole letters are included or the whole of a newspaper article is read with the question—then they will not appear on the business-paper.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GUNN: In deference to your ruling, I will only include a portion of the circular.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman may quote just enough of the circular to let the Chief Secretary know what circular he means.

The PREMIER: I suggest to the hon. member that he should ask "Did you write a letter? If so, what was it?" (Laughter.)

Mr. GUNN: In deference to your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I will ask the question, and just make reference to the circular letter.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved—

"1. That, in compliance with Standing Order No. 298, a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House; and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members.

"2. That such committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Barber, Mr. Smith, Mr. Winstanley, Mr. Roberts, Mr. McLachlan, Mr. Grayson, and the mover."

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved—

"That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Macartney, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Vowles, Mr. Gilday, Mr. Foley, Mr. Larcombe, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council."

ORDER OF BUSINESS.

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved—

"That, unless otherwise ordered, the House will meet for the despatch of business at 3 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday in each week, and that on Tuesday and Wednesday, and after 7 o'clock p.m. on Thursday, Government business do take precedence of all other business."

CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES.

MR. W. BERTRAM APPOINTED.

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That Mr. William Bertram be appointed Chairman of Committees of the Whole House,”

said: I have much pleasure in moving this motion, and I think it is one that will be received with general approbation by hon. members on both sides of the House. Mr. Bertram held the position of Chairman of Committees of the Whole House during the last Parliament, and I think he was quite a success in that position. (Hear, hear!) He has made himself thoroughly acquainted with parliamentary practice and procedure, and I think we all admit that he possesses all those qualities of patience, judgment, impartiality, and firmness which make for a successful presiding Chairman.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): It is not the intention of the Opposition to nominate anyone in opposition to Mr. Bertram, and I think it is only fair to say that in the view of members on this side of the House, Mr. Bertram has endeavoured fairly and impartially to carry out the duties of the position. (Hear, hear!) The only complaint that we have to make is, that we do feel, when resolutions for the closure are put, that at least a reasonable opportunity for discussion should be given, and I am afraid that there were times when the House was moving the Chair rather quickly in that direction, and the Chairman was apt to consider matters very fully discussed when they were not discussed at all. I mention that matter so that this session we may not have the same complaint to make.

Question put and passed.

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. MACARTNEY, who on rising was received with Opposition cheers, said: In accordance with the usual custom, I desire to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply on the first efforts they have made in the Chamber. From their own point of view, I think both those gentlemen dealt with matters fully and satisfactorily. It has been in the past a difficult matter for new members to address themselves to the House for the first time, it being a somewhat more critical audience, perhaps, than speakers are ordinarily accustomed to, but it has always been the pleasure of both sides of the House to extend to a new member that amount of consideration which is his due. Nowadays, I may say, members who come to this House, particularly those representing our friends on the other side, prove themselves to be somewhat qualified speakers, indicating a certain amount of practice beforehand, and I think we can say that the gentlemen who addressed themselves to the motion on this occasion have proved themselves to be capable speakers.

I think, while we welcome new members on both sides of the House, we might express some little regret that we have lost from our number men who have given years to the service of the country as members of this

House and men who have held high office both as officers of the House and in the Cabinet, with benefit to the State.

We are meeting somewhat earlier than usual. The time, I might say, is exceptional, and beyond what we can draw by inference from the Speech, there is nothing directly to indicate just why the departure has been made. There is a great deal to be said for meeting early. We know that as the summer months approach the conditions for carrying on the business of the House are irksome and unpleasant, and I am inclined to confess that under those circumstances the deliberations of the Assembly are not as satisfactory as they might otherwise be. At the same time, there are advantages in meeting in the latter part of the year. One of the principal advantages is that, when the financial year has concluded, you have the balance-sheet for the year before you, and finance is a matter that has always attracted a certain amount of attention on the motion that is now before us. By reason of the early meeting of Parliament this year, we have indications that we are going to have the Estimates submitted at an earlier period of the year than heretofore. Now, that is not altogether an advantage, because we know by experience that we are unable to get the Auditor-General's report before the month of October, and it is in the light of that report that we are able to discuss the Treasurer's financial proposals. We are often charged on this side of the House with criticising without full knowledge of the facts.

The PREMIER: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Now, it is from the Auditor-General's report and from such information as the Government condescend to give hon. members on this side, that we are able to criticise the Government's financial proposals at all. Unfortunately, we have had experience in the last Parliament of the difficulty of getting that correct information and that full information which is necessary effectively to criticise those proposals; and before we are called upon to discuss the Financial Statement, it is necessary that we should know at least the views of the Auditor-General, not only on the financial operations of the previous year, but also on the various industrial undertakings of the Government.

We can take it from His Excellency's Speech that finance is probably the chief trouble which has caused this early meeting of Parliament. It would have been better, perhaps, if the Government had been a little more frank, and had made the position quite plain to us and given us the facts which we might discuss. In their wisdom, they have not done so; but we must recognise that the financial position cannot be altogether satisfactory. We realise that, with the unusual undertakings of the last year or two, the expenditure has increased, notwithstanding the fact that the revenue has not only held up since the commencement of the war, but has actually shown, from year to year, an increase—a position in which no wise Government ought to be. I do not propose, in the absence of the materials, to endeavour to raise a financial discussion at the present juncture, but will await the interim Financial Statement which we are told in the Speech the Government will make before the close of the financial year. I presume it is the intention of the Government to wait until the debate on the Address

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in Reply is completed before they constitute the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means in order that we may take into consideration the position of the finances and before they introduce their financial measures.

The Speech differs from its predecessors in the absence of reference to the general conditions of our industries, except, perhaps, in a small degree in relation to one or other of the industries here and there. It omits any substantial reference to the progress of settlement on our lands and to the development of our resources. Some obscure references are made to mining and land settlement, and I suppose we will have, at a later period of the session, fuller opportunities given for more fully discussing these things. There is also an absence of reference to matters affecting the occupation and employment of our people, indicating just what is the position at the present time. Seeing that the Empire has been at war for something like four years, seeing that our shipping has been almost paralysed, seeing that many changes have taken place in connection with settlement, we would naturally expect some alteration to have taken place and to find a large amount of unemployment. Reference is made to this matter in connection with a large part of the State in the "Industrial Gazette"; but there is a very large portion of the State that is not touched upon at all in the "Industrial Gazette." I refer more particularly to the outside districts and the mining areas. The consequence is that we are in the dark just as to what the actual position is. It is a most extraordinary state of affairs, in view of the conditions that arise from time to time, that the State appears to be prosperous. That is to say, from the financial point of view, there appears to be money about; people are spending money, and all that sort of thing; but there is an absence of information with regard to the substantial condition of things which I think ought to have been given.

Perhaps, before I proceed further, I ought to express my regret that the elections were hurried on in the way that they were.

The PREMIER: Didn't Mr. Pritchard say you were ready?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not suppose the hon. gentleman agrees with everything Mr. Pritchard says. In any case, whether it is right or whether it is wrong, I hold the position of leader of this party for the moment, and I think that it is what I say that counts rather than what Mr. Pritchard may say.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: The elections were sprung on the country some three or four months before the expiry of the life of the last Parliament, and they were sprung on the country at a time when the country was ill-prepared.

Mr. KIRWAN: Where were they in 1912?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not referring to the metropolitan districts. I am now talking about the unfortunate districts that were visited by cyclone and flood. The Government represent a party which has at times expressed itself particularly tender on the subject of the exercise of the franchise, and certainly they were not consistent when they rushed the elections on at a time when

they must have known the people were not only suffering from the loss of life due to the floods, and loss of property, but at a time when thousands and thousands of people were unable to reach the various centres where the franchise had to be exercised.

The PREMIER: If we had delayed the elections, it would only have increased our majority.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going to be sidetracked in that way. I say it was an unfair thing to the people to spring the elections on them in that way; it was an unfair thing to those particular districts that it was done. I am not going to cry over the result of the elections in any way; but I think we might have expected some different treatment from the Government. The date of the elections was given here and given there, and altered about so as to create surprise. I say it was a thing that was more worthy of the game of "two-up" than anything else. The date of election was given out as being 23rd March.

The PREMIER: As soon as Mr. Pritchard suggested 16 March we agreed to it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman has attained notoriety for a certain amount of want of insincerity, may I say, and when the hon. gentleman makes a remark like that he just gives an illustration of what people mean when they refer to him. It is claimed that the election has resulted in

[4 p.m.] a great victory for the Government. It is quite true that the Government are stronger in point of numbers than they were before the election, and it is equally true that the Opposition are weaker in numbers than they were before the election. Reference has been made to this party going to the country as a National party, and the mover of the Address has criticised the party for so doing. I can only say that the National party came into being to take into its ranks those men who, believing in the defence of their country, had been driven from the Labour ranks, and joined a party that decided to put country before everything.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: It was no advantage to this party to go to the country as a National party, because we know that since the last conscription campaign the action of the Federal Government has not been popular with the people, and we know that we stand here as suffering from the action of those people who resent the conscription movement. Nevertheless, we stood to our colours, and we will stand to our colours in putting our country first, and we will keep the National flag at the top of the mast.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: While on the subject, I would also like to say that I think the condition of the rolls prior to the election a discredit to the party which had charge of it, and a discredit to the Government. There was no suggestion that the rolls could be regarded as pure, and the present Assistant Minister for Justice has already indicated that it is his intention to introduce a Bill for the purpose of obtaining something like purity in the condition of the rolls. It was a pretty sorry admission to make just after the election. I may say that a little surprise was manifested at the transfer of the electoral branch from the Home Department to the

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Department of Justice. Just what the object of it was I am unable to say, but probably before the session is over a little light may be thrown upon the subject. Talking in the same connection, it is a matter for regret that those men who have gone to the Front, men who have fought for their country, did not have a better opportunity of expressing their views in connection with the Government that should rule Queensland than they had.

The PREMIER: In Victoria, South Australia, and New South Wales they had no votes at all under a National Government.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Three years ago the proposition was made that provision should be made to give our soldiers the right to exercise the franchise.

The PREMIER: I made the proposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then it only shows how hypocritical that proposition was since effect was not given to it when the hon. gentleman had power to do it.

The PREMIER: It was given.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Act was passed three years ago, and it was not until the 5th or 12th February this year that certain regulations were promulgated which provided the machinery under which the soldiers could vote. As a matter of fact, the hon. member for Burnett made the proposition. The hon. gentleman claims the credit himself, but if it was really in his heart that the soldiers should have the opportunity to vote, why were these regulations made on the 12th February, allowing less than five weeks before the actual date fixed for election? The voting brought on at the last moment has not been of a very satisfactory character. I am very sorry to have to say so. I have an instance in my own electorate where the hon. gentleman himself—and I free him from any suggestion of impropriety in connection with it—exercised a vote in respect of a man whose proxy did not actually come by cable at all, and, worse for me, a vote was exercised in person in that man's name. That is to say, two votes were exercised in favour of a soldier who was at the Front, a man who did not give his proxy to the Premier, and one a personal vote, apparently a personation.

The PREMIER: A certificate must have been sent to me.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I free the hon. gentleman from any impropriety about it. I have no doubt he exercised that vote against me. (Government laughter.) At any rate, there were two votes there, and I venture to suggest to the hon. gentleman that if it is desirable to have an actual fair do in connection with the conduct of elections it would pay him to have an inquiry made into the various things that happened at the elections. I have mentioned one specific thing now, and my information is that there was a tremendous amount of impersonation during the recent elections, and the condition in which the rolls were kept permitted that to some extent. I cannot understand how it happened, because if we believe all we read there was a first-class card system established in the Electoral Department, and the rolls should not have been in the condition in which they were. But we had the spectacle of repeated police canvasses. I am not going to enter into minute details, but owing to these repeated police canvasses it was found that many people were on the roll several times over. I say that that is not a credit to the Adminis-

tration; it is not a credit to a party which is desirous of having what you may call a comprehensive roll, giving everybody the right to a vote and to one vote only. I hope the hon. gentleman will take some notice of what I say, and that some inquiry will be made which will prevent the possibility of such things occurring in future.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I believe every returning officer made a report upon the conduct of the election in his electorate, and I am quite sure there will be no objection to showing those reports.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going to criticise the hon. gentleman's conduct of the elections at all; I am talking about the subject of the elections and the voting, and I think it might be very well inquired into. When all is said and done, although the Government stand with forty-eight members to twenty-four, we are able to say that we represent as nearly as possible half the voting power of the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: And that indicates again that the Government have neglected that part of their function, under which they should have provided for a redistribution of seats. It is perfectly monstrous to think that under the system of voting which exists in this State one electorate should have something like 10,500 voters, and that the hon. member for Chillagoe should be returned by a paltry few hundred votes.

The TREASURER: If there had been 10,000 there I would have got 8,000 votes.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going to be thrown off the track in that way. Coming more particularly to the direct contents of the Speech, I regret that the Speech does not express the sympathy of Parliament with the unfortunate sufferers from the floods in the North. It has been pointed out what the Government has done in relieving the widespread distress, and the scheme of restoration which has been prepared, but no note of sympathy has been struck with the people who have suffered from the flood. And in this connection I should like to point out what I consider to be a grave error of judgment on the part of the Government, that at a time when the elections were pending the members for the particular districts should be the representatives of the Government in connection with the relief afforded to the people on the spot.

Mr. FOLEY: Who is better qualified?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member says, "Who is better qualified?" There are other things to consider than that. In the midst of the conduct of an election, is it a fair thing that a man is to be entrusted with a cheque book in one hand while he holds electoral claims in the other? We have police magistrates, we have police in nearly all centres of the State. They in times gone by have been entrusted with the administration of this relief.

The PREMIER: What members do you say had a cheque-book in one hand and an electoral claim in the other?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am speaking as nearly figuratively as possible. We know that the Secretary for Agriculture was an agent of the Government in that relief, we know also that the hon. member for Mackay, Mr. Smith, was an agent of the Government in connection with that relief, also you,

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Mr. Speaker, and Mr. Hartley, and although that may not be a breach of the Elections Act, I say that that is a thing which ought not to be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION interjected.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No doubt, if any trouble takes place in Clermont, the hon. member is the agent of the Government too, he is the Government, he is the one man who is to relieve the people, notwithstanding that he is so anxious to secure votes at the same time.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: What did the Prime Minister do?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think that the hon. member who makes that interjection cannot understand that law of relevancy which is a rule of the House. Perhaps, if he takes a little dive into the Standing Orders, he will understand whether it is relevant or not. Now, I quite endorse all that has been said in the Speech with reference to the war, although I am afraid there is not much substantial matter to support these words:—

“Our chief consolation is the certainty that Germany's dream of universal dominion cannot be realised, and that the heroic and costly resistance which the Empire and its allies are offering to her lawless ambition will not have been in vain.”

I wish we could say definitely that that certainly exists. Just at the present moment, perhaps, we are at the crucial juncture of the war. An offensive has commenced which, perhaps, is the heaviest offensive in the history of the world, the heaviest which may ever commence again. The fate of the Empire is perhaps depending on the result. Can we say that there is any certainty? Surely there is only one way to arrive at that certainty—that is, by every man putting his shoulder to the wheel to help to bring it to pass! If we did that, then, even if we failed, we have done our best. But what is the use of talking about a certainty—a certainty that does not exist—when we are in doubt as to whether we are doing as much as ought to be done under the circumstances.

I agree with the sentiments that have been expressed in the second paragraph of the Speech, although I regret that we are not able to go any further. During the last month or two we have had sitting in Melbourne one of the most important conferences that have been held in Australia. We have had placed before the country the entire situation in which the Empire is placed. Every endeavour has been made to remove the want of harmony and unity which is said to stand in the way of doing our level best. I would have liked to see some definite proposal in the Speech. In fact, I say this, and I say it seriously, that I regret we are met here to-day in political opposition. I would rather that we were standing shoulder to shoulder putting our best efforts forward in the defence of the Empire.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I regret, I say, that we have not a more definite announcement, but it is a pleasure to know that the Premier recognises the necessity that exists.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is gratifying to know he has taken some steps to redress the

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want, and though he has not taken me into his confidence as to what is to be done in the immediate future, I can only say that whatever arrangements he makes for bringing about the result that is wanted, he will not only have my hearty support—as he has had it already—but the hearty support of every member on this side of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Now we come further into the Speech, and we find a reference to the State meat shops. It is stated that they have thoroughly justified their existence. I cannot quite agree with that statement, because, travelling about in the tramcars as I do, I hear frequent expressions of disappointment in regard to the fact of the reduction of what has ordinarily been regarded as a convenience to the public. The system of distribution for the convenience of housewives which has existed for years has been practically done away with in some neighbourhoods. Although there is a supposed economy in one direction, there has been an increase of expense in travelling to and from the butchers' shops to obtain meat. And it is also found that, instead of the public being able to obtain the variety which they have hitherto been accustomed to obtain, they can only obtain beef—that is, beef from the State butchers' shops, and frozen meat at that. I have heard persons bitterly complain that when it is taken home and thawed the substance is taken out of it, and when it finds its way into the pan there is a shortage in quantity, a shortage in nutriment that is not made up by any economy in price. And when we remember that the Government will only be able to give meat at the prices at which it is sold in the State shops to-day so long as the agreement exists with the meatworks, then we can only come to the conclusion that when the time of the present agreement expires the private butchers will have been driven off the market, and the people will be in a very much worse position than they were before the shops started. There is much more to be said on the same subject: probably we shall have an opportunity of saying it later on. In the latter part of the paragraph dealing with the subject, the Government, I am glad to say, give no indication of their intention to extend the practice of the acquisition of stations. I think that it is a practice which can only be regarded as a speculative one, one which would only bring loss upon the people and discredit on the Government who enter upon it.

The next matter referred to is the State fish shop, and, although much is claimed for it, and although it is intimated that they are preparing to export, that after all is only a pious hope, and at the present time we have not experienced that improvement in reduced prices or supply which we have been led to expect.

The next paragraph—I am not prepared to say that the paragraphs appear in order of their relative importance—deals with the matter of land settlement. It is very easy for the Government to say that there is an increase in settlement as compared with last year's record, because last year's record was a particularly bad one. The only encouragement we can get from that is that there is an improvement, whatever the reason may be. I cannot understand the reference to selectors of agricultural farms bringing their holdings under perpetual lease tenure, unless

it is to obtain some concession in the way of reduction of rent. No explanation is given, and we have simply to take the statement as set forth in the Speech. But it is not as informative as it ought to be.

The next matter referred to deals with the opening of arsenic mines. That matter was dealt with yesterday by the hon. member who seconded the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply. The use of arsenic in connection with prickly-pear destruction is a most important matter. The question of the destruction of prickly-pear has been considered by the Government for many years. When the present Government came into power every step had been taken that could be taken to find out the means that should be adopted for dealing with the pest, but the conditions which were laid down have not been enforced as they should have been enforced. It is fair to admit that there has been a difficulty in obtaining arsenic, but I do not think that altogether accounts for the falling off noticeable in connection with this important matter. I think the Minister should furnish us with some information as to what, if anything, has been accomplished, or is being considered, in that direction.

I do not propose to refer to every paragraph in the Speech, and shall proceed now to the paragraph dealing with the mining industry. With the statement that "An enhanced price has been secured from the Imperial authorities for certain of the metals required in the manufacture of munitions," I quite agree, but I regret to say that there is nothing to show that mining has made that progress in Queensland which should have taken place, having regard to the mining resources we possess. It is true that in connection with some minerals which form a small proportion of our resources there has been some progress made, but with regard to gold, silver, and copper mining we find that there has been no headway at all. In view of the fact that these metals are bringing higher prices to-day than they have ever brought in the history of this State, we have a unique opportunity to settle the Cloncurry and other mining districts, and to extract those metals under favourable conditions such as may never occur again as far as Queensland is concerned. The reason that this has not been done must be found in our Labour legislation—our industrial legislation. There is no other explanation of the matter. You cannot read the reports of the strikes in those mining areas without coming to the conclusion that industrial troubles are preventing the development of mining properties, and the production of those metals that are essential for the war and for the development of Queensland. The Treasurer, we know, thoroughly understands this matter, and I may say that if he and the Government can put forward any proposal that will alter the present condition of things while yet there is time, they will do something for the good of Queensland.

The next item in the Speech has reference to the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the feasibility of manufacturing iron and steel in Queensland. I am inclined to think that that paragraph in the Speech convicts the Government of a certain amount of camouflage. Last session a Bill was introduced dealing with this matter, and the Government affected to drop it because the Upper House had imposed certain limitations and refused to authorise the Govern-

ment to spend a greater sum than £150,000 on the commencement of such works. The Speech says that the commission having—

"recommended that steps be taken to establish a State iron-smelting plant capable of producing pig-iron commercially, and to test in bulk the iron ore deposits of the State, the Department of Mines has continued its investigations into this matter with a view to giving effect to that recommendation."

The Government were so satisfied with the interim report of the commission last year that they introduced a Bill which gave them unlimited authority, not only in the expenditure of money without the consent of Parliament, but also in the resumption of businesses and properties. Yet they had only received an interim report, and they had not made the investigations which they say they are now making. Surely, then, that Bill was introduced for the purpose of throwing obloquy on the Upper House and for election purposes. The Government had not got the final report of the commission yet, and the only recommendation the commission made was that a sum of £5,000 should be expended. The Upper House were prepared last session to authorise the Government to handle a sum of £150,000 for this purpose, and yet the Government went to the electorates and complained of the action of the Upper House, as if it interfered in any degree with the interests of the State.

I trust that the Government will table the industrial agreements which have been made with certain branches of the public service, including the teachers, police, prisons and asylum employees, general officers, professional officers, and others. Since the Government have shelved the responsibility of controlling the public service, and have placed it on the shoulders of the Arbitration Court, it is a fair thing that we should have that information. Here we have a Government purporting to manage the affairs of the country, and yet they escape the responsibility of making the arrangements they ought to make with their employees, and pass that responsibility on to the judge of the Arbitration Court, which they ought not to do, no matter how qualified the judge may be.

The TREASURER: The agreements referred to are made between the Ministers and the associations concerned, not by the court.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That may be so, but they are made under the compulsion of the court.

The TREASURER: That is not so.

Mr. MACARTNEY: There is no agreement with the employees but what must go before the Arbitration Court.

The TREASURER: They were not consented by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then we are to have the report of the Royal Commission appointed to investigate the working of the Railway Department. I am sure we are all particularly anxious to see that report.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are not the only ones who wish to see it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We are anxious to see it, because, no doubt, it will be an interesting document, and I am sure it will receive the consideration of every member on this side of the House.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am glad you are going to give it consideration.

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Mr. MACARTNEY: It has not been usual in the past to indicate the introduction of a Loan Bill by referring to it in the Governor's Speech, and why reference is made to that matter here I am at a loss to understand. A Loan Bill was passed a few years ago which gave the Government very large borrowing powers, and it is strange that we should now be told that another Loan Bill is necessary.

The TREASURER: Your own Government nearly exhausted the powers given by that Act.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is not so. We know that money which has been borrowed has been used by the present Government for the purchase of cattle stations without the authority of Parliament, and for other purposes as well.

An interesting paragraph is one relating to measures providing for social and temperance reform. Unfortunately, we have got no details, and therefore we can say very little about it. We do not know whether it is to be an anti-shouting Bill or a 6 o'clock closing Bill. It would be interesting, perhaps, if the Government gave the country some indication of their intentions

[4.30 p.m.] in that direction, as a bare reference to the question is not satisfactory. It is not clear to the public what is intended, and it looks more like unnecessary printing than anything else. We will, therefore, have to hold back until the information concerning these measures is forthcoming.

The next paragraph we come to is a veiled threat to the Legislative Council. The Legislative Council are told that if they do not do their duty which the Constitution has imposed upon them, then something is going to happen. All I can say is this, that I am one of those who honestly believe that the Upper House has at all times done its duty.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: To vested interests.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It has done its duty no matter what Government was in power. We know that succeeding Governments have been checked in their legislation from time to time until the Upper House has been satisfied that the country desires the legislation introduced by the party in power.

The PREMIER: They had the verdict of the people with regard to this Government's legislation.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not quite understand what the verdict of the people means in that sense.

The PREMIER: They don't seem to understand it either.

Mr. MACARTNEY: When the Iron and Steel Works Bill was before the House, the hon. gentleman said that the people wanted an Iron and Steel Works Bill, while, as a matter of fact, such a measure had never been submitted to the people. Yet the hon. gentleman tried to belabour the Upper House because they did not pass that Bill. I do not know whether it would be a safe proposition for the Government to undertake the establishment of iron and steel works. It might be a very profitable undertaking, but surely to goodness there is a way of finding that out. There is a way of both Houses finding out. Opinions can be given by members of both Houses that would conduce to the usefulness and the propriety of introducing a measure of that sort. I take it

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that the Upper House have done their duty in connection with that Bill. I am not prepared to say that elections such as we have gone through justify the party in power in introducing measures that will upset the financial equilibrium of this State. It is not the duty of the Upper House to do that. They have got their duty to perform, and it is our duty to encourage the Upper House to perform that duty. I also think it is a mistake to make use of the Governor's Speech for the purpose of putting words into the Governor's mouth which are presumed to be the expressions of His Excellency. It is contrary to any previous practice.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the Speech is presumed to be his own?

Mr. MACARTNEY: So far as we know the practice is not to put words into His Excellency's mouth which the Governor would not use himself.

The PREMIER: Do you assume that he is in favour of everything else in the Speech?

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have a very long list of measures which the Government propose to introduce, and amongst others we have the Meat Works Bill. Surely hon. members opposite are not prepared to admit that the Upper House rejected that Bill unfairly when they only sought to introduce three words into the Bill, namely the words "on just terms."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Three vague words.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I must ask the hon. gentleman to keep quiet in this connection, especially when he talks about anything being vague. Then we have the Brisbane Tramways Fares Bill and the Brisbane Tramways Purchase Bill. We saw these Bills last session, but there was no discussion upon them. It is quite clear what is the object of these Bills. These measures are not to the credit of hon. members opposite. It does not bring credit upon any party that introduces such legislation. However, we will have an opportunity of dealing with these Bills later on in the session. Then we come to the City of Brisbane Bill. In referring to this measure, I might be permitted to depart from the usual practice, not to discuss a measure until it has been introduced and submitted to us in the ordinary way. I would suggest to the hon. gentleman in charge of that Bill that it might be submitted to a committee of the House. We could have on that committee men specially conversant with local authority matters. They would be able to pick out those clauses which are more or less formal, and we could put them out of the way at once, and it could be left to the House itself to deal with the matters about which, perhaps, both sides come into conflict. If we take the whole Bill as it was presented last session, and go through it clause by clause, then it will be an almost impossible task. Then there is a Public Works Standing Committee Bill proposed. There is no indication what this standing committee is going to be. Is it going to be a committee like that suggested in the Barcardine speech of three years ago—a committee of experts—or is it going to be a committee of political giants?

The PREMIER: A committee of standing.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It would not be a committee of standing if the hon. gentleman himself was not on it. (Laughter.) Although

a committee of experts was suggested in the Barcardine speech, we find that when the committee was appointed it was composed of members representing entirely the Government side of the House. If any complaint is made of the fact that no member from this side of the House has taken a seat on that committee, I may say that personally I cannot see what advantage a member of this side would have in taking his seat on that committee. The members from this side would be in a minority, and they would have to take the instructions of the caucus, just as the Government has to do, and no beneficial result would arise from it whatever. However, if the Bill to be introduced is such that we can approve of it—if, for instance, we are going to refer all public matters to an independent tribunal—a fairly independent board of experts—then the Government are going to have support from this side of the House.

The PREMIER: Do I infer from your remarks that the Opposition will not appoint any members from that side to take a seat on the committee?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I said that members on this side did not take a seat on the commission appointed by the hon. gentleman. I said nothing more than that. I notice that it is proposed to introduce a Constitution Act Amendment Bill. I do not know if that refers to the proposed abolition of another Chamber, or if it refers to an increase in salaries. An interesting individual gave the Press, the other day, an intimation that an Increase of Salary Bill was going to be introduced by a member of the Opposition. I can say that I have the authority of every member on this side to say that no such individual exists, and no such information was given by a member on this side.

Mr. KIRWAN: I saw it in the Melbourne "Age."

Mr. MACARTNEY: No doubt, you got the information sent everywhere. (Laughter.)

Mr. KIRWAN: Can you say that the "Brisbane Courier" did not send it to the Melbourne "Age"?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I notice there is a Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill proposed. The hon. member who moved the adoption of the Address in Reply said he hoped that the Bill would mean the retirement of the judges. We know that hon. members opposite deal with these matters in caucus, and the hon. member who made that remark was quite aware of the contents of the Bill. At any rate, it is only from what the hon. member has said that we can infer what the contents of this Supreme Court Bill are. I do not propose to say too much about it now, but it would be a misfortune if our friends on the other side should interfere with the fountain of justice. The fountain of justice is provided for the protection of all sections of the community—men of all views and men of all creeds—and if we begin to alter or violate that fountain, then we are going to interfere with one of the strongest pillars of liberty that we possess. I am not going to say anything personal at the present time in regard to the trend of legislation on the part of this Government in relation to the Industrial Arbitration Court and the proceedings that have taken place within the last few months.

Those proceedings are sub judice at the present moment, and I do not propose to say anything further just now, but to express the hope that the Government will not lightly enter into such a proposition as was suggested by the mover of the Address in Reply.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I also wish to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. I certainly think the mover, in particular, expressed his views very clearly, and he made one statement with which I was particularly struck. He did not say that in a large number of electorates the policy of the party that he represents was a reason for their election, but he said it was a retaliatory vote. I thoroughly realise, and most hon. members opposite realise, that it was a retaliatory vote, and consequently I think we may be pardoned for rather resenting the way in which the elections were carried out at a time when that retaliation was probably going to be stronger than it would have been at another time. A definite statement like that is something that should be taken note of, because it is rather a peculiar thing to be proud of winning an election practically on a retaliatory vote. One would think the policy put before the community for their benefit would be what they would vote on, and not because of something somebody else did, with which we have no connection whatever.

The PREMIER: You are under a misapprehension. That was an additional reason for the vote.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier may say it was an additional reason for the vote, but I am only giving the remarks of the mover of the Address in Reply, who represents one of those electorates.

I also wish to agree with that part of the Speech which makes reference to the war. At the present time it certainly seems to me out of place that we should be here with a large amount of contentious legislation before us when we do not know whether it is going to be of any use at all. We do not know how things are going to turn out.

Mr. CARTER: How do you know it is contentious?

Mr. MOORE: There is no doubt about the contentiousness of a large amount of this legislation. We have Bills mentioned in the Speech that were thrown out before, and in regard to which a majority of the people of Queensland expressed their disapproval.

Mr. CARTER: No.

Mr. MOORE: Did not they have an opportunity to express their approval or disapproval of the Upper House? How did they express it? By a 60,000 majority in favour of the Upper House, and yet hon. members opposite say there is no contentious legislation foreshadowed. Take the Local Authorities Bill. We know that it is going to be an extension of the franchise, and do we not know that the members of the local authorities expressed unanimous disapproval of the proposal? The Premier at one time said that those people who sat on local authorities were the most conservative men he ever had the misfortune to be connected with. If conservatism is synonymous with honesty and fair play, then they are conservative. They have expressed their

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disapproval of the proposal, and expressed it in unanswerable terms, and it is only a fair thing, when you have absolute unanimity of opinion such as that, that some notice of it should be taken by the Government. After all, they are elected by the ratepayers and they have a right to have their views respected. If the Government are desirous of widening the franchise, why not have a referendum on the matter?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is the will of the people.

Mr. MOORE: The will of the people! When it is in your favour it is all right, but the will of the people, when it goes against you, is to be swept on one side.

I would like to quote an advertisement in the "Agricultural Journal" in reference to the State Produce Agency, because, to my mind, the whole prosperity of Queensland is wrapped up in this question. The advertisement is as follows:—

"QUEENSLAND STATE PRODUCE AGENCY.

"Realising that primary production is the mainstay of all new countries, that agriculture is not only a prime factor in development but is at the present time vital to national safety, the Government is determined to do everything possible for the man on the land."

That agency is only one little side issue and is not going to bring about an increase in agriculture in Queensland.

Mr. CARTER: The farmers think so.

Mr. MOORE: The farmers do not think so. You have only to go round the country at the present time to see how little cultivation there is; how much less wheat has been put in this year than was put in previously. I would like to mention something about this wheat business, because I realise something more has to be done in the way of increasing agriculture and increasing settlement in Queensland. At the present time it is going down. I know areas in my own district that have gone out of cultivation merely because there was no stability of market and the whole business has been unprofitable.

Mr. PETERSON: Do not the Federal Government control the wheat output?

Mr. MOORE: They did not control it last year.

Mr. PETERSON: Yes.

Mr. MOORE: No. I will read something for the hon. member's benefit to show whether the Federal Government controlled it or not. I will read from one of Mr. Ryan's speeches last year. He said—

"Last year, when the farmers came to the Government it offered them a wheat pool, but because of the attitude of Mr. Barnes, of Warwick, and Mr. Grayson, and that of other 'so-called farmers' representatives,' they could not agree, and the offer of the Government was turned down. The farmers, to a large extent, were placed at the mercy of the millers."

The PREMIER: Is that Cecil Roberts's speech? (Government laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: "The farmers, to a large extent, were placed at the mercy of the millers."

Mr. CARTER: Is that not true?

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Mr. MOORE: Whose fault was it? Had Mr. Grayson an opportunity of forming a wheat pool? Had Mr. Barnes an opportunity of forming a wheat pool? There was only one man in Queensland who had an opportunity of forming a wheat pool, and what did he do? He shuffled and shuffled, trying to make political capital out of it, and then he went up to Toowoomba and tried to blame the unfortunate farmers. Here is a pamphlet written by an individual who wanted to know on what side Mr. Cecil Roberts stood; on what side Mr. George Carter stood. Did he do anything to help the farmers to get a wheat pool? Not a bit.

Mr. CARTER: Yes.

Mr. MOORE: He did absolutely nothing. He was absolutely a curiosity.

The SPEAKER: Order! I understand the hon. member referred to another hon. member as "a curiosity." I hope the hon. member will use parliamentary language, and I ask him to withdraw the expression.

Mr. MOORE: I withdraw, Mr. Speaker; it was the pamphlet that was the curiosity, as it was written in such an artful manner. The Premier was the one man who, at the time, had an opportunity of giving us a wheat pool.

Mr. PETERSON: Did your party agree?

Mr. MOORE: Did we agree to widen the franchise of the local authorities? Of course not. That does not count. He knew that agriculture was declining, and he knew it was absolutely necessary for something to be done to have stability of prices, and he did absolutely nothing. It is almost beyond belief that he should get on the platform and say it was our fault.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Premier offered them a pool.

Mr. MOORE: He did nothing of the sort. Was the hon. member for Toowoomba anywhere about at the time? Was he on any deputation? Did he know anything about it?

Mr. BRENNAN: Evidently I know more about it than you do.

The PREMIER: Didn't the hon. member for Warwick oppose a pool?

Mr. CORSER: Did you offer it?

Mr. MOORE: Did the hon. member for Warwick have an opportunity of granting a pool? Not at all! The Premier said in his speech at Toowoomba that the farmers were left at the mercy of the millers, and they were undoubtedly left at the mercy of the millers.

Mr. FREE: Didn't he ask them to agree amongst themselves first, and they could not do it?

Mr. MOORE: The Premier thought there was an opportunity of catching a few votes, and he was anxious to know which way the cat jumped before making up his mind, and, because it suited his purposes—because there was a little disagreement—he did nothing. I say some stability has got to be offered on a market for wheat to encourage the farmers to increase the area under cultivation. When you see how little land is being cultivated, surely the reason is obvious. The position has been realised in the other States. There they have been given a guarantee of a minimum price for their wheat.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What did the Prime Minister do in New South Wales?

Mr. MOORE: In New South Wales the State Ministry guaranteed a minimum price of 4s. per bushel at the railway station. What has the Government done in Queensland? According to the Premier himself, they have simply left the farmers at the mercy of the millers.

The PREMIER: At the mercy of the pretended farming representatives.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier is trying to shuffle out of the position to suit himself.

The PREMIER: The middlemen I attacked.

Mr. PETERSON: Are you and the hon. member for Warwick agreed on the question now?

Mr. MOORE: The question is whether we want to encourage the growing of wheat in Queensland. I do not think that we are doing anything to encourage it at present. Three years ago, when the Premier was standing for election, he said—

“Any impartial person who troubles to compare Queensland agricultural statistics with those of the other States will realise the disabilities and hardships under which our agriculturists labor in comparison with their brethren elsewhere.”

What has he done to remedy that? He has gone back instead of going forward, and I think it is time the Government realised that we want to encourage agriculture. We have large areas of land; we have people wanting to settle on the land. In the advertisement of the State Produce Agency they say food is an absolutely vital necessity to the Empire at the present time. Surely then the Government should have some suggestion to offer whereby the area of land under cultivation can be increased. The Government have the position at their finger ends; they know the financial position and the position of wheatgrowing in the State, and they should say, “We will take the matter in hand. We will fix a price for all the wheat that you can grow.” in order to encourage people to grow wheat. We do not want to continue in the position of having to import wheat from the other States when we could grow it ourselves.

Mr. CARTER: When the Government took your wheat in 1916 you accused them of stealing it.

Mr. MOORE: We accused them of stealing our butter.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And rightly so. They did steal our butter.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. MOORE: In this characteristic little speech that the Premier made to the farmers at Toowoomba he went a little further in regard to butter. When the hon. member for Port Curtis was talking about butter last session, he said—

“He wanted to point out that, despite the fact that butter was bringing a higher price in the old country, and that the price was fixed in London at 22s., the farmers’ butter in Queensland was being sold by the Nationalist Government of the Commonwealth at 14s. per cwt.—15s. less $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., which reduced it to 14s. The cost of overseas transport would be equivalent to about 2s., making the commodity 17s. Who was getting the difference?”

“Mr. Bebbington: And your Minister gave 14s.

“Mr. CARTER: Who was getting the difference between 17s., the cost in London, and 22s.? Yet hon. members opposite—who professed to be studying the farmers’ interests—had nothing to say when the National Federal Government, which they had returned to power, took their butter at 15s., less $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent., or equivalent to 14s. a cwt., and sent it to England, where it was sold at 22s.”

He made an insinuation that someone was getting the difference.

Mr. CARTER: So someone was.

Mr. MOORE: A little while previously, when there was a shortage of butter in Australia—there was a good market for Queensland butter—it was seized in Queensland at a fixed price. When there was a glut, and the Government were at their wits end and did not know what to do, and there was talk in the papers about closing up the dairying industry, what did the Secretary for Agriculture or the Government do? They ran round like a motherless foal and did absolutely nothing but talk about previous Governments. There was an insinuation about someone getting a commission. The farmers themselves, through their co-operative companies, took hold of the situation. They sent down representatives to Melbourne at their own expense and made a deal with the Imperial Government through the Federal Government for a direct sale, and they were congratulated in the press of Australia on their enterprise. They were to get 15s. per cwt., less $\frac{3}{4}$ per cent.

Mr. CARTER: What about the difference?

Mr. MOORE: If you read the agreement that was published in the papers you will be able to find out.

Mr. CARTER: The Federal authorities could not tell me the other day.

Mr. MOORE: The Premier said at Toowoomba—

“At the present time there was a difference of 5s. between London parity and the price secured here by dairymen for their butter fat. The middleman was getting the difference.”

There is the answer to the hon. member’s question. It was sold direct to the Imperial authorities for the troops at a fixed price. If any of it was not required for the troops it was to be sold for private consumption, and one-half of the profits was to go to the producers in Australia.

Mr. CARTER: Where does the other half go to?

Mr. MOORE: It will probably go to the Federal Government or the British Government, who are conducting the pool. Seeing they take the risk, they are surely entitled to it.

Mr. CARTER: What warrant have you for saying that the producers are getting half of the profits? The farmers are not getting it.

Mr. MOORE: Of course they have not got it yet. The pool is not finished yet. They cannot get it until the pool is finished. When it is finished, 50 per cent. of the profits will go to the producers. I think it is an exceptionally good deal that the producers themselves made. They were forced into the position, and the Government did not help them. Then we have misleading statements made to the country by the leader of the Government, which, I think, is a poor way to go about

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the matter, and very unfair. These people should be helped. We want to encourage co-operation amongst our farmers, and they should receive help from the Government instead of those misleading statements being made.

There is another thing I want to speak of in regard to country matters, and that is the question of roads. The Premier, in a previous election, laid stress in his policy speech on the necessity for good roads.

Mr. CARTER: What did your Government do?

Mr. MOORE: What has your Government been doing for the last three years? The Premier said the roads were to be taken in hand. He stated—

"It is recognised that in many parts of the State where our most fertile land is situated, one of the greatest difficulties with which the early settlers are faced is the inaccessibility of their land through lack of roads. This difficulty the Labour party will endeavour to overcome by having roads constructed from the nearest railway into all areas of land thrown open for selection."

The position is getting worse instead of better. When you see what is going on in other States through a proper grasp of this subject, it will be recognised that something will have to be done in Queensland. In Victoria £500,000 was put aside to be spent on roads in the country districts.

Mr. CARTER: You have evidently not been on the country roads there.

Mr. MOORE: I have. I also went to the Roads Office in Melbourne, and found that with the decreased cost of haulage the expenditure was proving a good investment to the State. Lands which were used as sheep walks originally in that State, owing to the cheap haulage made possible by good roads, are now being settled. It is an eye-opener to go there and see what good roads will do for a place. It is the same in Tasmania, which is a poor country compared with Queensland; good roads have made that country prosperous by causing cheaper haulage. That is something which will have to be done in Queensland. We have settlers located at long distances from a railway, and, with very difficult country to cross, they cannot get their crops to market. We must make good roads so that they can get their produce to market. I have inspected land put aside for returned soldiers, and in some cases the land is good, but it is absolutely inaccessible.

Mr. BRENNAN: Where was that?

Mr. MOORE: It is in the Cooyar district. The part I refer to is about 8 miles from a railway, and it would be quite impossible for the settlers to get their produce away to market. That is not only the position in that district but in places all through the State. When the Premier toured the State, the matter was brought before his notice, and he said that the Government would have to do something with regard to roads.

The PREMIER: Are you complaining about what I said?

Mr. MOORE: No, but at your want of action, and at no reference being made to it in the Speech.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What have the divisional boards in your district done?

Mr. MOORE: They do what they can. Unfortunately, the field of taxation has been

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so much encroached upon by the State and Federal Governments that they are not in a position to get the funds.

Hon. W. N. GILLIES: And they wasted what they did raise.

Mr. MOORE: It is all very well for a man who sits on the front bench to say that they wasted money. It was a very difficult thing with the small revenue they had to keep up the large area of roads. In our district we have about 3,500 miles of road, and about £3,000 or £4,000 to keep them up. The fact that we have in a country like Queensland practically impassable roads through some of our best country is a matter which is worthy of the attention of any Government. Following on the promises in the Premier's Barcaldine speech, I should have liked to see something to show that the Government were going to make a start.

The PREMIER: I made reference to it in the Townsville speech.

Mr. MOORE: You have not made reference to it in the Governor's Speech. To me it is one of the most important things in Queensland.

Next to roads, one of the most important things is the prickly-pear question, which is getting more and more serious, and I should like to see something definite done. It is no use merely talking about what is going to happen. When you see country which was kept free by the previous Government, and up to two years ago, now being allowed to be overrun with pear, one wonders what is going to be the end of it. I know the country personally which was kept free by the last Government through the expenditure of large sums of money, and the local authorities had to keep their parts of it free, and it is a disgrace to see that country now going back to pear. Surely it is the duty of the present Government to spend a little more money to keep that country in the good condition it has been kept in rather than let it go into pear? It is getting into that country, and is going to affect not only the private owner but the Crown, because it is timber country, and once you let the pear get into a timber area, that is the end of it. It would be a more legitimate thing to spend money to keep the pear in check than on enterprises that are not going to bring in the same revenue to the State as this expenditure will later on. Everybody who travels about the country, must recognise what a menace the pear is becoming, and unless some steps are taken, Queensland will practically be ruined. Men are getting less and less willing to take up prickly-pear country, and an attempt should be made to keep country clean that is now clean, especially when money is being spent in so many other ways.

I should like also to put in a word for uniformity in the collecting of taxation. Farmers and producers find a great difficulty in making up these separate returns. Surely some agreement could be made with the Commonwealth for a uniform return to be made out once a year, instead of having to make out double forms twice a year.

The PREMIER: That is a question which has been gone into.

Mr. MOORE: I do not see anything about it in the Speech.

The PREMIER: It was dealt with at the Treasurers' Conference.

Mr. MOORE: This should be made a live question, and not one merely for academical discussion at a conference. It is a great hardship to a large number of farmers to have to make out these returns, and I know some who, in my opinion, are paying more than they ought to pay through ignorance. It should be made as simple as possible, and only one form should be required to be made out. At the present time it is certainly a hardship.

Now, I just want to mention the question of railways—of course, because, naturally, it is a vital one to an agricultural constituency. We hope for something better through this report which is to be made by the commission, but I am afraid some better means of administration will have to be found. What do we find in connection with dairying? We find the farmers encouraged to aerate their milk; we find them doing everything to keep it clean; we find it paid for by grade, and very often their labour is destroyed by the unsuitable trucks by which it is brought down. It is dirty, and arrives in a heated condition—no ice, perhaps, at all, and very often not even in a cool truck. It is hard that men should be encouraged, bullied almost into doing these things to get their produce in good condition, only to find that their efforts are nullified by want of system in the Railway Department, or want of trucks to get it to market in good condition. It has been brought up here time after time. You hear the butter graders in Brisbane say it is owing to its being heated in transit. I think that the farmers are entitled to some greater consideration, to more trucks, or to better constructed trucks. I think if they pay the rate for cool trucks they are entitled to have them properly insulated and made cool by ice instead of having the produce carried in such a way that it arrives in Brisbane in such a condition that they not only lose points, but the grade is sometimes brought down to second, and they lose money in consequence. This is a matter that wants the attention of this Government or any Government. The trouble has been going on for a long time, not only lately. I know of a case where butter was brought down to second grade, being of bad texture through being overheated. It was taken over to the wharf to be loaded, and owing to a dispute between two men all the wharf labourers went out, and it cost about £120 for taxis to take it back to the store and restore it. The farmers just had to bear the brunt and pay the expense. In cases like that it should be the duty of the Government to see that at a time like this a boat that is able to take dairy produce does not go away from Brisbane without taking it simply because of some paltry dispute—I don't think the men knew themselves what it was about. It seems an unfair thing that agriculturists should be treated in such a way as that, and I wish to see some improvement made by which they will be able to get their produce to market in proper cool trucks, in the condition in which it leaves the factory. The control should not cease when it leaves the factory, but should also continue in the Railway Department. If they are going to mismanage a public utility, then they should pay damages the same as the farmer has to pay when he is guilty of neglect. All these things are going to increase production, and if they are not attended to production is going to decrease; and I think it is recognised by

everybody that in a State like Queensland an increase of production is absolutely essential.

I should like to mention that taxation is becoming heavy, very heavy, on certain sections of the community that are hardly in a position to bear it. Prices are high at the present time, I know, but you have also to take into consideration the high cost of production. In many of our factories and other occupations in the country the cost of production has increased more than in proportion to the increase in the price of the produce. Machinery has increased tremendously, bags have gone up, and other things have gone up enormously, and many men are hard put to it to know how to meet all the demands that are coming upon them. And when we see, as we do, more taxation to be inevitable from the Federal Government, then it behoves the Government to look round to see whether there is not some way whereby this burden of taxation can be lightened.

Mr. CARTER: And yet you want public roads built!

Mr. MOORE: That is going to lighten the burden—anything that is going to decrease the cost of transit, anything that is going to enable them to get their produce to market more easily and more cheaply.

Mr. CARTER: Do you think they can be built for nothing?

Mr. MOORE: No, but I think it is wise expenditure, and I think that there is a lot which is not wise at the present time. When you know that agriculture is going back instead of coming on, then I think the Government should take some notice, and it should be made a special part of their programme to see that some remedy is found for the position. Dealing with agriculture should be one of the early parts of the work of the session, instead of being left out of the party programme altogether. A lot of Bills are mentioned, but I do not see any that are going to be of use to the farmer. Taxation is heavy, and the farmer has got to find the money. Prices are not always going to stay as they are, and the cost of production is mounting up so high that very often there is very little balance left. There seems to be no effort to see that they get bags or twine or other things that they require at a cheaper rate. I know from personal experience that the difficulties that they are meeting are inducing some of them to give up and go in for plain wages. Some means will have to be found by which these people will be able to increase their production, and by which more people will be encouraged to go on the land than at present. Now, wherever you go, the cry is that it does not pay, and the cost of producing is too high.

Mr. COLLINS: We are getting no dividends out of the war.

Mr. MOORE: We have got to pay for it later on, and the money has got to be found. We know the State taxation and the Federal taxation has got to be heavy, and I want to see people put in the position of being able to pay it, and not forced into the position of having to go back instead of going forward.

I do not see much in the Speech about education. I should like to see a greater amount of money made available.

Mr. CARTER: More money should be spent, and no taxation!

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: The money should be spent, because, at the present time in many cases, the children are sadly overcrowded. Repeated applications have been made for help, but the cry always is, "No money available." I have half a dozen instances in which the children are overcrowded, and I think it is only right and fair that more money should be made available for such purposes instead of being spent on State enterprises, such as £50,000 for the State fish shops—which are not going to be of the same benefit to the future of Queensland as those kiddies. I know of a case in which a school was built for twenty-four children, and the average attendance now is 159. We expect better consideration as far as the country districts are concerned. I do not object to money being spent on school buildings in other places, but I say that school buildings in the country are sadly in need of being increased in size.

At the present time, unless you belong to a particular party, you do not get the consideration you ought to receive, and people who are arranging a show for educational purposes, and who ask the Railway Department for a special train for the convenience of visitors, have to put up a guarantee before that special train will be run, while in other cases six or eight persons can get a special train for their convenience without providing any guarantee.

The PREMIER: Where is a special train sent for six or eight people?

Mr. MOORE: To Ellangowan. There might be a dozen people, and there is no guarantee asked for in that case, but if an agricultural show is organised for educational purposes and to get people to go into the country and emulate what producers are doing, the promoters of the show have to find a guarantee for a special train. If one set of persons have to put up a guarantee, then all persons who get special trains should do the same thing.

The PREMIER: Is this some new practice introduced by the present Government?

Mr. MOORE: Well, it was not introduced by the old Government. This is the first time that the people I refer to have been asked to put up a guarantee. However, I trust that as we have started the session early, we shall finish early, though I am afraid that if we have to deal with all the Bills mentioned in the Speech we shall be here, not only the rest of this year, but part of next year as well. I do not wish to take up any further time, and I shall conclude by asking the Government to recognise that agriculture in Queensland is deserving of better treatment and more encouragement than it has received from the Government in the past, that better means of transit should be supplied for produce so that it will not deteriorate, and that the farmers should be guaranteed a market for their wheat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Draughton*): Like other members, I must congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. About the Governor's Speech, there may be different opinions. It is very difficult to grasp what the Speech means, but one thing is certainly absent from it. There is no proposal to encourage increased production. There is not a single word on this subject. Everyone admits that increased production is necessary, but in this Speech there is not one word about a living wage to the man on the

[*Mr. Moore.*

land—the producer. Neither is there any measure on the statute-book which gives to the producer the produce of his labour. Every measure that has been placed on the statute-book has tended to restrict production in every part of Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: How can you say that when the number of cheese factories has increased so greatly?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The reason we have more cheese factories throughout Queensland than we had formerly is that there has been co-operative effort among the farmers, and these factories have been established in spite of bad laws and bad administration by the present Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: What about Victoria, where they have your party in power? Things are rotten there.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This Speech is all mere camouflage. (Government laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: That is a new word.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is a new word, but it is not a new practice. The Speech is intended to cover up the practices of the party opposite—to cover up their destructive methods and their aims and objects in the future. If we want to get at what the real Labour socialist party mean we must go right away from the Speech to the fountain head, the Labour socialist conference. I am going to prove that it is mere hypocrisy for any Minister or any member on that side of the House to go to an agricultural show, or any function connected with the advocacy of increased production, and wish that institution success, when every man on that side is sworn to destroy our industries.

Several members interjecting,

The SPEAKER said: Order! I must ask hon. members to refrain from interjections. If they do not allow the hon. member to make his speech in his own way I shall have to mention their names to the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hon. members will admit—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must address me, and not members of the Chamber.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am sure you, Sir, with your large experience, will admit that the first plank in the Labour socialist platform is the nationalisation of the [5.30 p.m.] means of production and exchange. I will read an extract from the "Worker" of 7th February, 1918, page 12. The writer of this article used these words, and he does not want any misunderstanding—

"Remember the definition of socialism and there can never be any doubt as to what are the aims and ambitions of socialists. Private ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange must be abolished, and all three brought under democratic control."

I will go further. I will go right to the conference, to the masters of members sitting opposite, to the Premier's master. The gentleman I refer to sits in the Upper House. He is Mr. Demaine, a member of the Legislative Council. He was president of the conference, and he is the boss. Mr. Speaker, I will read one or two extracts from the speech made by Mr. Demaine, but you probably know it all off by heart. (Laughter.)

I know they are your aims and objects, and what you are working for. Let me quote Mr. Demaine's words—

“AIMS AND ASPIRATIONS.

“And now, what of the aims and aspirations of our grand Labour-Socialist movement generally? There are some signs of differences and misunderstanding between the political and industrial sections which should not be, and would not be if the position was rightly understood.”

Here are the aims and objects—

“We need first to make the movement more definitely socialistic to have our people realise that Labour objects and ideals are more than high wages and shorter hours.”

I want the people in my district to realise what this means. I want them to get the facts. During the recent election I never mentioned my opponent's name that I know of, and neither did I quote anything that I could not bear out by official figures and documents.

Mr. STOPFORD: What are you quoting from?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: From the address of the president of the Labour conference. He says—

“Labour ideals are more than high wages. These are, of course, necessary during the transition period from wage-slavery to freedom, but the ideal, the abolition of the wages system, and the substitution of common ownership and control of industry for the common good must be kept more before the people than it has been.”

If we have the abolition of the wages system and the adoption of common ownership, and the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution and exchange, then what have we got left? The “Worker” of 7th February, page 12, says—

“There is no intention of nationalising tooth brushes. There is no intention of making tooth brushes common property.”

It seems that that is about all a man will have left to him. All that is to be left to a man is his tooth brush.

Mr. STOPFORD: What about the children working on the farms?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The children have to work to keep the hon. gentleman in cheap food.

Mr. STOPFORD: But there is no need to sweat them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Mr. Demaine further said—

“THE NEED OF CLASS-CONSCIOUSNESS.

“One of the educational needs of the hour is to bring the workers to a fuller realisation of the need for a greater class-consciousness amongst them. The fond hope that some of them have that they may become employers and exploiters of labour in due course must be dispelled, and the fact that there can be no possible identity of interest between employer and employees must be driven into their minds.”

Talk about industrial peace! Do you ever expect any understanding to be arrived at when statements are made like that? Do

you ever expect any prosperity in a State where practically the head of the Government uses words like that, and when he tells the working men to dismiss from their minds any thought of becoming bosses and never think of it any more. They are told to never think of becoming their own masters, and never think of their independence at all. The working men are told “All we have to do is to destroy capital; destroy the man who employs you; destroy his credit; destroy everything.” These are not my words, but the words of their own boss. These are the words of the man who rules them and whose bidding they have got to do. He further says—

“We cannot have a true democracy until capitalism is overthrown, and only a class-conscious people can do the overthrowing. Therefore, we must have Labour class-conscious and imbued with the knowledge that only by the communalisation, or socialisation of capital, can the interests of Labour and capital become identical.”

Here we have naked and unashamed the whole of the aims and objects of the party opposite. They can put what they like into the Governor's Speech and do what they like to hide their ideals, but here they are placed before the people in the speech of their president. If you take away all the means of production and exchange, what have you left? A man's horses, cattle, implements, and everything else are all means of production, and if all these things are taken away and nationalised, what has the farmer left? What about the man who has been working for years and years and making sacrifices to make himself a home if he is told “We are going to nationalise your means of production and we are going to make you share with your neighbour who has got nothing at all.” We know what nationalisation means. I will show you how the speech of the president was approved by the party opposite, and also by the Premier himself.

Mr. COLLINS: The “Rising Sun” published it all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This is what the Premier said with regard to the president's speech—

“Mr. T. J. Ryan (Premier) says that he had listened with pleasure to the president's address, and he would like to add his personal appreciation of ‘Billy’ Demaine, who had ever been the backbone of the Labour movement in Maryborough.”

Mr. FREE interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Do you approve of that?

Mr. FREE: Yes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You approve of a man having to share his goods after all his years of labour to acquire them. After the old pioneers battling for years all they are to have left are their tooth brushes. It is no credit to the party who says that. It is no credit to the men who sit over there and occupy their positions under false pretences. ~~Especially, they member sitting over there got in on false pretences; no doubt about it.~~

Mr. COLLINS: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in stating that hon. members on this side of the House got into Parliament by false pretences?

Mr. Bebbington.]

The SPEAKER: The hon. member is not in order in making that statement, and I must ask him to withdraw it. I hope the hon. member will not use such extravagant language.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will withdraw it, and say they got in by making misstatements. As I have shown, the Premier approved of the statement, and said he had listened with great pleasure on the question of nationalisation. We want now to go to the question of how are things nationalised? What is the principle of nationalisation? If they would go to a farmer and say, "We want your farm and we are going to take it, but we are going to give you the value of it," no one would object. We would say it was a fair business proposition, but the Government never did make a fair proposition in their lives. Their way of doing business in connection with nationalisation is to put on sufficient taxation until the taxes amount to the rental value, and naturally the property becomes useless, and it becomes confiscation. I can point out land to-day in Queensland worth £200,000 or £300,000 that is as much confiscated as if the Government held the deeds, because the taxes on the land are more than the rental value. When the taxes are more than the rental value, the property is valueless. This Government last session provided for confiscation just as a mortgagee provides for it in a deed of mortgage. They provided that when a person could not pay the taxes the Government should step in as first mortgagee and have the right to take the property. So you see every law that has been placed on the statute-book by the Labour party has been put there with the object of bringing about confiscation and preparing for the time when the Government should take possession of the land.

Mr. COOPER: Would you buy out the liquor trade?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not speaking of the liquor trade. I never did any business with the liquor trade, so I am not in a position to judge. I like to speak of something that I know something about, and of the liquor trade I know absolutely nothing. The seconder of the Address in Reply said that the producers preferred direct taxation to being unable to get markets for their stuff and to having no sale for their products.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Taxation has been increased. This Government has raised the railway rates and they have increased the cost of living to the man on the land. There is not a single thing that they have done for the producers except pass the Cane Prices Boards Act, and yet they have added on to him the land tax, which they can increase at any time till it becomes confiscation. I will deal with the land tax at a later period, as I propose moving a motion next Thursday dealing with that question.

Now, I will deal with some of the Government undertakings. The one that has been held up as being the most successful is the State butcher shops. If ever there was a business carried on under misstatements and misrepresentation, it is the State butcher shops. I would like the Minister interested to say where he got his sheep from to start the shops. I was informed that some people trucked some sheep from a certain railway

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station and a man stood on the platform and watched them until they were all in the trucks, and then he stepped forward and claimed them. The Government took possession, and we believe the Government sold them in their shops and never paid for them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Rot! Rubbish!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If it is not true, let the Minister say so.

Mr. KIRWAN: You know perfectly well it is untrue.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did not the Government take 1,000 sheep on the border? What did they do with them? That is a fair question. They sit condemned. If they gave us an answer, we would be satisfied, but they sit condemned and cannot answer. We have it upon the Premier's own statement to-day that they have never supplied a single beast to the State shops themselves.

Mr. CARTER: Nonsense!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Do you make a liar of the Premier?

Mr. CARTER: No, you are doing that.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Premier gave me a correct answer as a gentleman would. When the Government started out to establish these State butcher shops they started their State stations. Having put something like £600,000 or £700,000 into State stations, they acted in the same way that any other trust or combine which was out to make money would act.

Mr. STOFFORD: You ought to know.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do know. The first thing they did was to starve the Brisbane market in order to raise prices. Not a single beast left the State stations for the Brisbane market, and you know perfectly well that when you starve the market, prices go up. The Government deliberately starved the Brisbane market by keeping the stock from the stations they had purchased out of the market until the Brisbane market was higher than the Sydney market. The first week after the Brisbane market was higher than the Sydney market some 60 or 80 cattle from the State stations were sent in to get the big price. They fetched the highest prices on record. I cannot say exactly what the price was, but the market ran from 55s. to 64s. per 100 lb. or nearly 7d. per lb. live weight. We can only conclude that the Government got the same price as other people, and we must conclude that they sold their cattle at 7d. per lb. live weight while at the same time they compelled the grazing selector, through the meatworks, to supply the State shops at 3l. to 3½d. per lb. Those are the facts of the case. The Government spent thousands of pounds more in buying cattle stations than they had any need to. If they had gone about the matter quietly instead of giving out that they were unlimited buyers of station properties, they would have got their stations for a great deal less. But the Government ran up the price of the stations; they ran up the price of cattle, with the result that the people of Australia have to pay a very big price for their meat, and all because the Government acted in the same way as trusts and combines.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member did not make the Salvation Army pay.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are a deliberate liar.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

Mr. CARTER: I rise to a point of order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I told him the truth, Mr. Speaker, and I tell him again that he is a deliberate liar.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I ask the hon. member for Drayton to withdraw that statement, and I also ask the hon. member for Port Curtis to refrain from making insulting interjections.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CARTER: I was not saying anything insulting, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I withdraw what I said.

Mr. ROBERTS: I rise to a point of order. I distinctly heard the hon. member for Port Curtis say that the hon. member for Drayton had robbed the Salvation Army.

Mr. CARTER: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You did, and you are a deliberate liar. I say it again.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I call upon the hon. member for Drayton to resume his seat.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will.

Mr. CARTER: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are a deliberate liar. I tell you again.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I have again to ask the hon. member for Drayton to withdraw that statement. He will now have to apologise.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let him withdraw what he said, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: Order! I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement and apologise.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then I withdraw, and I apologise to you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will have to apologise for saying that another hon. member is a liar.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I withdraw, and apologise to you, Mr. Speaker.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Port Curtis may now explain himself.

Mr. CARTER: The hon. member for East Toowoomba has entirely misrepresented what I said. The statement I made was, "The hon. member did not make the Salvation Army pay."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What did you mean by that? (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I trust the hon. member will collect himself before he proceeds.

Mr. CARTER: Do you desire me to withdraw that, Mr. Speaker? I am quite prepared to withdraw it, and say that the hon. member did make it pay. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are a scoundrel.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! I shall have to name both hon. members if they

continue this conduct. The hon. member interrupted the hon. member for Drayton, whom I made withdraw and apologise for what he said. Now, the hon. member adds insult to injury. I shall have no hesitation in dealing with both the hon. member for Drayton and the hon. member for Port Curtis if they disobey the ruling of the Chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have no intention of disobeying you, Sir, and I thank you. I want to say that the Government made a mistake in opening the State butchers' shops.

Mr. CARTER: I rise to a point of order.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order! The incident is closed, and I shall take no further notice of it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Government made a big mistake in not accepting the suggestion that was made by the meat companies—that they should fix the price for the whole of Queensland at 42d. per lb., leaving the companies to dispose of the balance of their meat in the highest market in the world. Had they done that, every butcher in Queensland would have had an opportunity of buying his meat at 42d. per lb., and that would have ensured a reasonable price throughout Queensland for the consumer, and there would have been no ruination of butchers, and no large number of men thrown out of work in Brisbane, as has been the case.

Mr. STOPFORD: Where did you get that information?

The SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the hon. member for Mount Morgan to refrain from interjecting, and allow the hon. member for Drayton to continue his speech. Hon. members will have an opportunity of replying to the remarks made by the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. STOPFORD: I only asked for information.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The public of Queensland would have obtained their meat at a reasonable price, whilst at the same time the graziers would have got a good price for their stock, because they would have had the markets of the world open to them for the disposal of their surplus product. Had that been done by the Government, it would have been straightforward business. It would have placed them on exactly the same footing as the private butchers. If that course had been adopted, I have no hesitation in saying that the Government would have been unable to compete with the private butchers. The trouble was that the Government wanted to place themselves in a better position than those with whom they were going to compete. The meat companies had a perfect right to insist on every butcher in the State being able to buy on the same terms as the Government.

Mr. ROBERTS: The meat companies held out as long as they could.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They held out as long as they could, and the contract was made by the Government at the point of the bayonet and by the application of force. That is what has caused all the dissatisfaction in the State. That is really what upset the meat business and prevented the public from getting meat at a reasonable price. I am quite convinced that no Government can compete on equal terms with private enterprise. It is no disparagement to the Government to say that, because they have to pay

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for management. They would not have the slightest chance of competing on equal terms. I find that the Government charge about 100 per cent. for distributing their meat—over 100 per cent., indeed. They pay 3d. and 2½d. per lb., and they sell a portion of the meat at 8d. per lb., and a good portion of it at 7½d. per lb. If a private butcher charged 100 per cent. for distributing his meat, what an outcry there would be! The business is not one where you can hold your stock for twelve months, or for a couple of years. It is a business in which you practically turn your stock over every day. I will read out some of the prices. Here are some: Cost 3½d., sold at 6½d.; cost 3d., sold at 4½d.; cost 3d., sold at 5d.; cost 3½d., sold at 7½d. The lowest is: Cost 3d., sold at 5½d. There is nearly 100 per cent. made on that meat at the State shops on what they pay the producer for it. Those statements are so serious that there should be a petition presented to the Federal Government, asking them to step in and limit the profits of the State Government on the meat they are handling, or at least limit the cost of distribution. The Federal Prices Board is limiting the cost of distributing groceries—I am not complaining, probably they are quite right—to about 14 or 15 per cent. If a business man's profits must be limited to 15 per cent., why allow the State butchers' shops to make 100 per cent.? The State butchers' shops should either sell the meat cheaper to the public, or pay more than 3½d. to the producers. But we have the State, which should be an object lesson to other traders, making 100 per cent. profit on an article that is turned over every day.

Mr. COLLINS: What do you mean by 100 per cent.?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I mean that they get 100 per cent. more than they pay for it. The Premier admitted that they paid from 3d. to 3½d. per lb. for their meat, and according to their own price list they sell it for 8d. per lb. That is from 100 to 150 per cent.

Mr. COLLINS: That is not profit; the State is not getting 100 per cent. profit.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say the State is getting 100 per cent. profit on the cost of distribution. As showing that these things are not being worked in the interests of the community, let us see what has happened at Croydon, which is right up against a State station. The people there are within 40 miles of a State station, and complain that they cannot get meat, while the Government are sending the meat 1,000 miles away. Again, to show that things are not too satisfactory, let me read the wail of a Labourite with regard to the Valley shop, as published in the "Standard" of to-day—

"It is heartrending to an old Labourite and lover of State enterprise like myself to see people who once bustled and pushed to get served at the State shop now buying their meat elsewhere. If asked the reason, they say they can't get what they require. I want to know why? Some might think it is because the novelty has worn off, but there must be something wrong when genuine Labour supporters purchase their meat from private firms a few doors away. One would almost think that the present state of affairs was brought about by Tory instigation to ruin the business. It is a common thing to hear that the Valley shop is done."

We see that, after all, the Government meat

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shops are not a success, and if the Government had to buy their meat on the same conditions and at the same prices as other people, they could not remain in business a month, because their cost of distribution is too high. A man must be a rich man to go there, because they do not give people any credit. The idea of selling meat to the poor!

I will now just refer to one or two other matters which the Government has had great credit for, and one is in connection with the sugar industry. I am not an expert in sugar, but I know something of the agreement which the Government entered into. I know of the first agreement entered into between the old Labour party in the Federal Government and this Government, under which this Government allowed the old Labour Commonwealth Government to make £1,000,000 a year out of the blood and sweat of the sugar producers. Then the Government claim the credit for getting the increased price of £21 a ton, but I say that the credit for getting that increased price was due to the farmers' organisations in the sugar districts, and to the hon. member for Mirani and Colonel Rankin. These gentlemen went into the agreement and found that the Commonwealth Government were making a million a year out of the sugar-grower. They brought the matter up in this House and the Premier denied the statement; but Mr. Corsor, the Federal member for Wide Bay, went into the matter and found that the Federal Government were making this money out of the sugar-growers. The growers asked to have the price increased to £21 a ton to meet expenses, and Mr. Hughes agreed to give it to them. There is no credit due to this Government for getting that increased price of £21 a ton; the credit belongs to the farmers' organisations, the hon. member for Mirani and Colonel Rankin, and Mr. Corsor, the Federal member for Wide Bay. Then, again, we have the matter of the ships held up through the strike. The hon. member for Mirani went down to Melbourne, and he had no sooner gone down than the ships began to move again.

Mr. FOLEY: He must be a king.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Most certainly—I am glad that the hon. member admits it. I like to give credit where credit is due. There is not a single measure on the statute-book, except the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act, placed there by the Denham Government, to encourage production or to give the producer the right to the results of his labour.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the State Produce Agency?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The State Produce Agency is one of those mists—it is all in the air yet. They have spent a lot of money, and have not done any good. I do not believe that the agency has got the farmers a single shilling more so far. They may make a success—I am quite in favour of it—and I hope they will. It may be going strong, but it is quite possible to go strong and lose a lot of money. I know that the produce business is one of the most difficult to handle that it is possible to engage in, and I believe that they will lose it. It is very easy to run a lot of money out, but it is a different thing to get it back. I hope they will do well, but, unfortunately, they have adopted such a bad way of going about it. (Government laughter.)

I should like to deal with the question of education a little. We need a higher class of teacher in the small schools in the country. I know I have been advocating this for the last seven or eight years; I am not blaming this Government any more than any other. Perhaps it is a matter of finance, but at the same time the children in the country need a good education equally as much as the children in the towns. Yet I have heard it from two or three teachers—and it would seem to come on very good authority—that they are practically discouraging the country children from gaining scholarships or from going in for them, so that they might remain in the country.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is true as I was told it. One of the leading teachers removed from my district told me, "I know I am telling the children a lie, but I always tell them that farming is the best"—he took good care not to stay there himself. What we want to do is to give the man on the land a living wage, see that he gets paid for what he produces, give him something to induce him to stay in the country. That is what we are aiming to do—to make the conditions in the country just as good as in the city, and if you do that there will be no need for the best of our people to rush out of the country into the city and compete for the jobs there. There will be more work in the city and fewer people rushing in from the country. But there is not one item in the programme, nothing whatever in the Governor's Speech, nothing whatever has been done to give the country producer more for his labour.

Now, coming to industrial matters, as I said before, nothing whatever has been done to enable the employer or anybody else in this State to pay good wages and keep the standard of wages up to what it is. It is very necessary to maintain the standard of living which we have set out, and the only way in which the Government have tried to do that so far is to tax savings which have been made in the past. There has been no effort to increase production, no effort to give the working man a better inducement to do his best. The only thing that has been done has been to tax savings that have been built up in the past, and that cannot last long. Any Government that taxes people off the land—(Government dissent)—yes, they discourage them to stay there, they discourage production in every way, and then they tax the savings of years past in order to make up for the deficiencies of production in the present—and you cannot keep that up very long. Unless there is a change, unless production is increased, unless the people have better machinery so that they can earn all they get and a little bit more—any man who thinks business can be carried on from hand to mouth knows nothing about it—unless there is an increase in production there is going to be a crash in Australia. I have always advocated the use of up-to-date machinery, I have always advocated piecework. I say that a man has a right to earn as much as he can, provided he is paid what he has earned. Give them what they can earn, and do not induce them to slow down, because that is going to ruin Australia. I saw some machinery put into a factory; the hands were all on piecework at rates fixed by an Arbitration Court or under

an agreement such as is often made and registered as an award—at any rate under an Arbitration Court schedule. When that machinery was started most of it was worked by girls. It was a preserving works, and the youngest and most inexperienced girl earned 10s. a day, and the others up to 21s. a day.

Mr. ROBERTS: Where was it?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was in a preserving works at Yarran. But the works, which cost something like £160,000, were only worked for two or three weeks in the year, and that was because of the discouragement of leasehold tenure—the people would not stop there to produce. Another thing was that there were too many officials—the cost of the officials was more than they used to make out of it in a private capacity. There is nothing that is going to lift up the people but co-operative effort—and I say this on behalf of the Commissioner for that irrigation colony, that he is doing his best to turn the State butter and bacon factory into co-operative effort. He says that State management is no good, it is too expensive. There are any amount of lovely residences there, all occupied by officers; the producers occupy a few tin huts. That cannot last long, and I say, to the Commissioner's credit, that he is doing his best for co-operative effort. Twenty-five years ago the farmer had to take his stuff to the local storekeeper and take what he gave him for it. When there came a drought the storekeeper had to keep the farmer going. Such a system was likely to bring bankruptcy to both parties. To-day, after twenty-five years of co-operation or profit-sharing, we have ninety-six or more co-operative factories in Queensland, and the shareholders get what they earn. Most of those factories have been paid for by the industry of the producers. If the producers can own the producing interests of the State, why cannot the workers do the same? They can, if they will make the same sacrifices. The producers have to work and wait for their money, but they eventually get it. By co-operation the workers could, in a very short time, own the whole of the producing interests of Australia. I know the unions will turn down such a proposal, and I know the Treasurer dare not bring in a measure to establish co-operation, because he knows that immediately the workers own the factories and machinery in this State they will not be socialists, and will not be dominated by the Trades Hall and the tyranny of the people who manage that institution. I advocate that the working men should own the producing interests of the State and that they should have all the rights attaching to their labour, but members on the other side dare not give them that opportunity, because if they did their doom would be sealed. We put on the statute-book a measure which gave the sugar-growers 75 per cent. of the money they required for their factories, and we gave other producers 50 per cent. of the money they required for factories. Why cannot we apply that principle to the industries of the working men? What farmers have done the working men can do, and if they have any sense they will do it. To show the tyranny of the Trades Hall, let me read a quotation which shows that they have destroyed the secrecy of the ballot.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: Who?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The socialists. Dare a man vote as he likes? No, he dare not.

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Mr. H. Boote, the editor of the "Worker," stated at a recent meeting that "A note would be taken of every man who voted against Mr. Judd's motion on the following night." Do you call that freedom of action? When the working men get their co-operative factories and own the machinery they will break away from all that kind of thing. But my time is up, and I must conclude. I thank the House for the hearing they have given me.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): I should like to offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. It may seem somewhat peculiar for a new member to offer them his congratulations on their maiden effort, but if I get through as well as the hon. member for Logan I shall be very well satisfied. I should also like to congratulate the hon. member for Logan upon his recent attitude in setting an example to members of the House—the first example of the kind, I think, provided by this House—in enlisting to protect this House and the rights and privileges of the people from our enemy. It is an example which might very well be followed by many members of this House. I call to mind a member of the New South Wales Legislature with whom I had the honour to fight. He was one of the first to go and he was one of the first to fall. I am sorry that Queensland has had to wait for nearly four years before one of its parliamentarians had it dawned upon him that it is time that he occupied a better position than sitting in this Chamber. I am just reminded that Colonel Rankin, who was a member of this House, has been to the front. I think those members on the other side of the House who are eligible might follow the example of Mr. James, the hon. member for Logan. I was surprised to notice that that hon. member made reference to recruiting in the way he did, and I was surprised to find that there is no sign of the olive branch being held out by the Government. This is a time when all parties should be united, and should assist the Premier to raise his thousand men. I was also surprised at the hon. member for Logan mentioning the little opposition which the Premier met with at the Post Office. I personally regret it, and I believe that every member on this side of the House regrets it. But we must bear in mind that it was only one or two people who were responsible for the opposition, and that it was not an organised attempt at interruption, as has been suggested. Unfortunately, members on the other side of the House are only too pleased to accept little interferences of that kind as an excuse for retarding their efforts in favour of recruiting. I think we might well adjourn this House in order to assist the Premier to raise the Ryan Thousand.

Mr. COLLINS: And hand over the country to militarism.

Mr. SIZER: I would remind the hon. member that I personally—and I am not egotistical—risked a considerable amount to fight militarism, and I am certainly not going to allow it to be introduced here. I think we might well adjourn and assist to raise the Ryan Thousand. We may have doubts as to the advisability of having a private name for a thousand, but it will make no difference. I believe that members on this side of the House are just as willing to raise men under the name of the Ryan Thousand as they would be to raise men under any other

name. I think the hon. member for the Logan was somewhat presumptuous in placing the onus for retarding recruiting on members on this side of the House, but I am not going to waste time in refuting his statement, because, in my opinion, we should leave such matters alone. We should realise that the fate of the Empire is being weighed in the balance, and that if we are defeated, all our free institutions, all our Houses of Legislature, and all the legislation we may put on the statute-book will avail us nothing. I do not think that defeat is likely, and I sincerely trust that I may prove correct in my assumption. We should close up our ranks, and get into the business of recruiting.

The PREMIER: What about the attitude of the "Brisbane Courier" on this matter?

Mr. SIZER: I have expressed my opinion very definitely on this matter, and I can tell the Premier that I am prepared to go out with him, if he will have me with him, to endeavour to raise recruits for his thousand.

Mr. KIRWAN: Don't you think it would be a good thing if you interned the editor of the "Courier" for a start? (Laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is rambling somewhat. I want to refer to a certain question which came under my [7.30 p.m.] notice during the election campaign. I am a new member of the House, but I understand that this is the time when you bring before the House things which you noticed during the election campaign. Before I go as far as that I would like to make reference to another part of the speech of the hon. member for Logan. He said we should not be surprised if the Government made places for political deadbeats, because it was only a legacy handed down by their predecessors. I quite agree with the hon. member. I think he is quite correct. If we only look around and see exactly what has been the practice of hon. gentlemen opposite, we will see that the hon. member for Logan had evidently missed the bus. If we went down to the State Insurance Department to-day we would find quite a number of political deadbeats. I think we would find one political deadbeat who was rejected at the last election, and we might also find quite a number of gentlemen who were candidates at the last election.

Hon. W. N. GILLIES: You will find it is a beehive of industry.

Mr. SIZER: If we go to the State Insurance Department, we will find that the huge proportion of the inspectors there are political friends of the Government. I do not say so much against that, but the particular point I wish to make is that not one-half of them know anything about insurance. (Government dissent.)

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That is not true.

Mr. SIZER: One of them might, but three-fourths of them, at any rate, do not know anything about State insurance, or any other insurance.

Mr. PETERSON: Are you an authority on insurance?

Mr. SIZER: I am an authority to this extent, that I know that a man who has never had any experience of insurance in his life and then suddenly gets into the business must start without any experience. We find that the State Insurance Office is the home of a good many of them. We can go on to another place which has been commented on

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considerably lately and that is the Soldiers' Industrial Institute. We find there that the Minister for Education has realised that there is only one man in this creation who can carry on the Soldiers' Industrial Institute, and that is a gentleman who has never been a manager in his life, and whose only qualification, so far as I know, for the position of manager is that he was a member of the party on the other side of the House. Possibly, I shall deal with that matter later on, but it shows conclusively that the hon. member for Logan had seriously forgotten his book when he mentioned that the hon. members on this side of the House had handed down a legacy to them in connection with the appointment of political deadbeats. I agree with him that the State departments should not be the home of men of a particular political colour. They should be the most competent men to be found to fill the positions. Let me go on a little bit further and deal with some of the questions which came before my notice during the elections. I am surprised, considering the tactics which were used, that any of the members on this side were returned at all. I am surprised that certain Ministers should have acted in the way they did in connection with the elections, and to see how low they got down so far as corrupting the public service is concerned.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Terrible.

Mr. SIZER: It is nothing new to them. The honourable members on this side of the House—(Government laughter)—like to see things done in a fair and honest way. I expect that hon. members on the other side came into this House absolutely old politicians.

Mr. FOLEY: You are a new chum, anyhow.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman is evidently not a newchum. The way in which some hon. members opposite secured information which might possibly assist them in their campaign is somewhat remarkable. There were repeatedly seen appearing in the Government Press statements coming from returned soldiers, stating that the Government had been treating them liberally. There was one in particular which was headed "A Soldier's Appreciation," and it went on to say exactly how the Soldiers' Inquiry Office had done such a lot for that particular man. I say that it did all that it was required to do. (Hear, hear!) I am not saying anything against that at all, but I want to show where the Government used that in order to turn it to their own political ends. A letter appeared in the "Daily Standard" of 8th March from Private W. Boatfield, Rosemount Hospital. It was received by the then Assistant Minister for Justice, and it was put forward as one of the letters received by the Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He particularly asked me to have that letter published.

Mr. SIZER: It was made to appear as though this man wished to give publicity to the Government's action. I have a letter here which was received from the Rosemount Military Hospital, and I intend to read it.

THE SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman will not be in order in reading a private letter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Quote it.

THE SPEAKER: The hon. member may quote from the letter, but he must not read it.

Mr. SIZER: The text of the letter is this: This particular soldier went to the Soldiers' Inquiry Office, and subsequently the officer in charge asked him if he would go and see him on important business. When he arrived he saw Mr. Robilliard, who was in charge of the office. Mr. Robilliard told him that the Minister in charge of the department was seriously thinking of closing the office because it did not warrant the expense, and he said that if only he could get a letter from a man like him to show to the Minister it would help him to keep his position.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Surely you don't believe that?

Mr. SIZER: Knowing that Robilliard was a brother soldier, he said he would be only too pleased to give him any letter which might benefit him in any way. Then they continued the conversation, and eventually the letter was handed over. They then got on to politics, and Boatfield informed Robilliard that he was a National supporter, and Mr. Robilliard replied that he was a Labour supporter. Nothing further was said, and they then went down to a certain hotel in the city and had a drink, and when they arrived they went into the bar quite in the usual way, and there they saw the Assistant Minister for Justice. Immediately after Mr. Robilliard took Mr. Boatfield over and introduced him—

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I do not think I ever met him in my life.

Mr. SIZER: And handed the Minister a letter. Immediately he did so the Minister read it and said, "This is the kind of letter to get. If you can get a few more like that your position is assured." (Government laughter.) Just a moment. He continued, "You are on £1,000 a year." (Renewed laughter.) It was at that time that Mr. Boatfield realised his position.

Mr. PETERSON: He wanted a cut at the £1,000 a year.

Mr. SIZER: Mr. Boatfield expressed his indignation in very strong language, and a few days after, that very letter, which had been obtained by those methods, appeared in the "Daily Standard." Hon. members opposite may laugh, but that is not fair business in connection with an election. That is only one of the many tricks which were used by the Labour party in order to secure their return, and if their case is so strong that there is no need for them to do anything except put their policy forward, I cannot understand why they should stoop to such low tricks as they did in this particular case.

Mr. FOLEY: He was pulling your leg all right.

Mr. SIZER: I take it that it is time that at least the Government should keep its State offices clean politically, particularly when we remember that the same gentleman was to be seen as a public servant appearing as chairman for the Assistant Minister for Justice at his meetings.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He never appeared as chairman at all.

Mr. SIZER: Well, he was on your platform. There was nothing remarkable in that, but when we consider the case of Mr. Elliott who was in the State Insurance Office, we find that because he just opened his mouth and made some remarks derogatory to the Government, without any opportunity

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being given to him to make a statement of his case, he was immediately dismissed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Quite wrong.

Mr. SIZER: I say what is good for one is good for another, and the Government, no matter what Government it may be, should by no means allow the State offices to be used for electioneering purposes. That is one of the matters that came under my notice, and I hope we shall get some satisfactory information with regard to the soldiers' votes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you know that Elliott was sacked for insulting a returned soldier?

Mr. SIZER: I think hon. members will agree that there are no men more entitled to votes than the men overseas. Of course, I quite understand the Minister who had charge of the framing of the regulations with regard to soldiers' votes making such a blunder because he had not availed himself of the opportunity, which had been open to him for three years, of getting information at first hand from the front. If he had availed himself of that information he would never have allowed himself to get into such a muddle, as he did, with the soldiers' votes, because it must have dawned upon any person who realised what war is, that very often men are 100 miles from headquarters, and possibly from a telegraph station; and how, in the name of goodness, was it possible for those men who were 100 miles away to record their proxies, I do not know.

Mr. FOLEY: Well, why complain?

Mr. SIZER: Because it took nearly three years before it dawned upon the Government to make any provision for the soldiers to record their votes, and it was only after the hon. member for Burnett mentioned it that the Government decided on the expensive method of cabling. I would not object to the expense had it been effective, but when it was expensive and ineffective, and deprived a vast majority of the soldiers of a vote, then the Government is to blame and the Government deserves the criticism of every man who was thus deprived of his vote and of every citizen who is looking to the Government to give all sections of the community fair play.

I notice in the Governor's Speech quite a lot of things, and I was pleased to see it stated that the Government intends to do something for the returned soldiers. This is not a thing for one side of the House or for the other side of the House. It is a matter not only for this Government, but for every Government in Australia. Every Government should realise their duty and do their utmost for the soldiers on their return.

Mr. PETERSON: What did Hughes do?

Mr. SIZER: It is a duty that devolves on every Government, and it is my intention to assist the Government in every way possible to pass legislation that will benefit the soldiers, because we have to realise that this is a question that is going to have one of two effects. It is either going to lead to greater prosperity in Queensland and Australia, or it is going to lead, unfortunately, I am afraid, to a large amount of national waste. Therefore, we cannot afford to quibble over such matters, and I, personally, think that all matters of repatriation should come under one head, and that is the national Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: Then why are you quibbling over the Soldiers' Institute now?

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Mr. SIZER: I will give you the Soldiers' Institute presently. There are some things which the Government may well do which they appear not to be doing, and there are little irregularities which need looking into with regard to the soldiers. The Premier has always made a boast that this State is doing more than any other State in the Commonwealth for the returned soldiers. Yet there are times when the department dealing with the soldiers is not sympathetic. I have information with regard to one man who was fighting at the front when his wife died, and in accordance with custom the military authorities put her affairs into the hands of the Public Curator. Eventually her mother was surprised to receive a letter from the Public Curator, informing her that there were four accounts outstanding which had to be paid, and an additional amount for administration expenses, and added in the letter that "on payment of the above-mentioned sum it would not be necessary for the Curator to take any action to sell the deceased's furniture, horse, and cart." The inference is there—and the inference is correct—that the Public Curator had threatened that unless these amounts were paid—

Mr. PETERSON: He is not a Labour man.

Mr. SIZER: That, unless those accounts were paid, they would have to sell that unfortunate man's furniture, and horse and cart, despite the fact that the Federal regulations lay down distinctly that a soldier's property cannot be sold while he is at the front.

Mr. CARTER: Did you see the Public Curator?

Mr. SIZER: The inference is clear. There would have been no mention in this letter, and there would have been no necessity for mentioning it, unless that was contemplated.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Public Curator had a brother killed at the front, and he is the kindest man in Queensland.

Mr. SIZER: He is carrying out the Government's regulations and instructions. It is not fair, and the Government should realise that, though these may be only small matters of administration, yet they have a big effect.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What date was that?

Mr. SIZER: The letter I have is dated 26th April.

Mr. PETERSON: Give the name.

Mr. SIZER: It is the case of Mrs. Margaret Humphreys.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What did you do about it?

Mr. SIZER: I am looking to the Government to do something in the matter. The case has not been fixed up, although they have been dealing with solicitors for several days in connection with it. The Government should realise that what makes it particularly hard is that although three of the claims against the estate have been voluntarily withdrawn, yet the Public Curator's item for cost of administration has remained rigid.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: This is an attack upon the Public Curator.

Mr. SIZER: Whether it is an attack on the Public Curator or not, it is not right. We, in this House, have the right to express our opinions, and I intend to do so as forcibly as I can.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have been a member for two months. What have you done about it?

Mr. PETERSON: Why did you save it up for a bomb?

Mr. SIZER: If a bomb fell under some hon. members it would not do them any harm.

Mr. PETERSON: You aren't game to put one, anyhow.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member is not game to go where they put them.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why don't you have another go?

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. SIZER: That question comes from a member who could very well be there, and I think it is very unbecoming of him, considering he has had three and a-half years to think about the war and decide whether it is not his duty to go, to throw such insults across the floor of the House. I think the remark is very unfair. (Hear, hear!) In connection with the Public Curator's Department, when married men are departing for the front they are informed that, should they fall, their affairs will be fixed up for them by the Public Curator. As a matter of fact, we find that the Public Curator is charging more than is charged by solicitors for administering their estates. He is charging as high as 2½ per cent. in some cases. I would suggest that the Minister in charge of the Department should look into this matter. It may be a comparatively small matter, but it is these little irregularities which cause great discomfort to soldiers' dependents, and they should be rectified as soon as possible.

Hon. W. N. GILLIES: Why haven't you brought them under my notice?

Mr. SIZER: I am doing it now. I shall now deal with a matter which appears to have been worrying some hon. members this evening—the Soldiers' Industrial Institute. Possibly I may be informed that the men connected with the institute were not justified in the action they took. In order to make it perfectly clear that they were justified, I intend to quote from a speech which was delivered in Toowoomba on 28th July last by a Mr. Moroney, secretary of the Queensland Railway Union, who was speaking on the question of unionists and non-unionists. He said—

"At present, however, they were in the unfortunate position that the non-unionists receive the same benefits as those unionists who had been fighting for the benefits for years. . . . The unions had borne considerable expense in fighting for unionism, but to-day they had the spectacle of the man who had been standing outside the fence for years deriving the same benefit as the man who had been inside the fence for years in support of the cause of unionism. Not only had unionists paid their dues, but they had also to run the risk of dismissal because they were unionists."

That shows that there is justification for a body of men protecting themselves. If you just apply Mr. Moroney's remarks to "returned soldiers" instead of to "unionists," you will find exactly what the men at the institute claimed. Their claim was that they had been fighting to protect the biggest union in the world—the British Empire. They are coming back to see that those men

outside the fence—that is the men who have not been overseas—are depriving them of the benefits—not which they lost their positions or ran the risk of being dismissed to gain for themselves, but which they ran the risk of losing their lives in order to gain. That is the material difference between the two positions, and I think that the loss of life is infinitely more serious than the loss of a job. You can get another job, but you cannot get another life. I do not intend to say one word against trade unionism, but I think there is every justification for the attitude taken up by the men connected with the Industrial Institute. That institute was built up by one of the most patriotic women in this State, and it was through that institute that quite a large number of men received employment. The men thought they were quite justified in claiming that proper consideration should be given to a returned man, who was capable of managing the institute. They asked for nothing more than proper consideration, and they were met with a refusal. They simply asked that the position should be advertised, stating clearly what the position was, the salary to be paid, and further stating that preference would be given to a returned soldier. I think that is not an exorbitant demand.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: For an insolvent organisation.

Mr. SIZER: If that is so, all the more need for a capable man as manager, and I am sure that with the Government's manager they would be in a far worse state in a very short time. The Minister must [8 p.m.] remember that the men stopped work, and the only thing that went on was the manager's salary and the rent. I do not think that our demand was an exorbitant one when we asked that the position should be advertised.

Mr. PAYNE: The son of the man who has got it is fighting.

Mr. SIZER: More credit to the son. (Hear, hear!)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you think I was going to let the thing drift on and hundreds of pounds a week be lost in waste and mismanagement?

Mr. SIZER: The Minister evidently did not intend that, because he had made up his mind to close it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You know that is not so.

Mr. SIZER: These men asked that the position should be advertised, but the Minister refused, and because of a regrettable incident which took place, and which was carried out by a stranger so far as the institute was concerned—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No.

Mr. SIZER: Because of that the Minister took it into his head that it would not be safe to go in the daytime, and he sent the police in the middle of the night and turned four men out on to the streets to go where they liked, without any money in their pockets, in order to close the institute. I do not know whether he was afraid that a number of crippled men might molest him: possibly he was, because I have recollections that on one occasion, at a committee meeting, even the Minister thought he would not be safe without police protection, and he had to bring police to a committee meeting. I can quite

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understand why the Minister gave orders for it to be done in the middle of the night. The great cry of the Minister is that the institute is insolvent, but I want to impress on the Minister that if the institute is insolvent it is an educational institute, and I say then that our State schools and technical colleges are insolvent, because we spend thousands of pounds on them every year, and in finance we receive nothing in return.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They are not mismanaged.

MR. SIZER: I might go further, and say that the whole of the Education Department is insolvent from that point of view. The only return you get in that connection is the return of good citizenship, and you have to bear in mind that you cannot weigh these matters in pounds, shillings, and pence. The Minister's action in closing the institute in the way he did—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I should have done it three weeks ago or more.

MR. SIZER: As I told the Minister before, I am quite convinced that he had contemplated doing it, and that he regretted not doing it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do regret it now, but I did not at the time.

MR. SIZER: We have to realise that the soldiers have to get sympathetic consideration from all Governments, and it would have been very little for the Government to extend the period for advertising, and advertise for a returned man. If he could not be found, there would have been no option but to accept the Government's nomination; but I venture to say that a returned man with qualifications could be found; if not, it would be a great insult upon a large number of men who have gone from this State. Let me return to the insolvency position. The Minister knows very well that he would have recouped the Government from the Federal Government.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Nonsense!

MR. SIZER: The Minister says "Nonsense"! He knows perfectly well that the chairman of that advisory committee, of which the hon. gentleman is a member, informed me personally that they expected to get the money from the Federal Government, and they would have got it from the Federal Government. Members of the advisory committee were also told by the Minister that he expected a refund from the Federal Government. The only difference is this—that the Federal Government might have claimed the right to veto the Government's nominee, and rather than run the risk of the Government's nominee being vetoed they thought it was better to place the whole of the expense on the people of Queensland, when the Federal Government were prepared to pay it.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You told me yourself that you could not get them to do it.

MR. SIZER: The Minister has had a short lapse of memory when he speaks of my having told him that. I told the Minister that if he would but endeavour to try and get the money from the Federal Government he might be surprised.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I asked you did you not try, and you said "No: you would not do it."

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MR. SIZER: I am not the Minister, and if the Minister tried now, he might possibly still get a surprise. At any rate, we have got to this position, and it was unfair for the Minister to pass the public reflections upon the honorary superintendent in the way he has done. I say it is disgraceful that a Minister of the Crown should hide himself behind the petticoats of a patriotic woman in order that he might redeem his own face in the eyes of the public for a great blunder for which he himself is responsible. He is responsible, because he is a member of that advisory committee. The name "advisory committee" implies that it is there to advise, and if it did not advise, or if it advised wrongly, then it is to blame. Considering the Minister was a member of that committee, and a regular attendant thereat, I say he must be responsible for everything that has gone wrong at the institute.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I was away in the Central district.

MR. SIZER: At any rate, I myself, and I am sure the majority of the people in this State, hold the Minister responsible, and not Mrs. Andrews.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: That is ridiculous.

MR. SIZER: There is no doubt that eventually the institute will be reopened, and I sincerely hope and trust that the Minister will realise the mistake he has made—he certainly has made a mistake, and I do not think in his inner thought he will attempt to deny it—

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You have made a mistake.

MR. SIZER: I think he should realise that, although he has made a mistake, he should open the institute again.

MR. H. L. HARTLEY: Get the Commonwealth Government to open it; they are the people to reopen it.

MR. SIZER: Then the hon. member opposite should not claim the credit for what is being done for the returned soldiers, but give it to the Federal Government.

MR. KIRWAN: I will tell you what they are doing presently; they are starving down in Melbourne.

MR. SIZER: This institute should be opened and be extended, because it is one of those portions of repatriation which, to my mind, is doing a tremendous amount of good, and it is on one of those lines which we shall have to proceed. I say this here—that I quite agree that possibly there is need for reorganisation. There may be need for reorganisation in any new institute or in any new business, but I think the Government have taken upon themselves a very grave responsibility by closing even one institute in such a vast scheme as that of repatriation. It is quite easy to reorganise, possibly essential to reorganise, but once you have destroyed, once you have closed down, you have to take time, and a very considerable amount of time, before you can reopen. So an amount of time is lost, and considering that men are coming back in their thousands, we cannot afford to lose any time or close one institute for one single day.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Why did you do it? Why did you help to do it?

MR. FOLEY: You called the men out on strike.

MR. SIZER: I deny that I called the men out on strike. I ask hon. members—if they

know such an awful lot—to go and try to persuade the men to work under the manager. If they had gone before, I am afraid hon. members opposite might have been threatened with what the manager got.

Mr. HARTLEY: Two can play that game.

Mr. COLLINS: Brute force.

Mr. SIZER: Hon. members opposite do not want to be shown what a glorious thing they have done.

Mr. COLLINS: I know all about your career.

Mr. SIZER: I can assure the hon. member that it is a pretty good career.

Mr. COLLINS: A wonderful career—full of egotism.

Mr. SIZER: There is little doubt that if I were half as egotistical as the hon. member, I am afraid I should be thinking I was too great for this Chamber. Now, I propose to come back to the Speech and deal with a subject out of which the hon. member for Logan, to my mind, made a certain amount of capital—that the Supreme Courts Acts Amendment Bill is possibly to restrict the ages of the judges. I agree with him in his anticipations of the object of the Bill. I expect that he is quite in accord with that, and one of the arguments that he used—rather a remarkable one—was that so many of the judges' decisions had been reversed, and that in consequence they were somewhat mentally deficient. He somewhat emphasised it by saying that when those decisions had been taken to the High Court of Australia they had been reversed. So he sought protection behind the High Court of Australia; and yet I should think that if we were to go into the ages of the judges of the High Court of Australia we would find that they were quite as great as those of the judges of the Supreme Court of Queensland. But hon. members are quite satisfied with the judges of the High Court; the hon. member for Logan said so. And he also agreed that the Privy Council set aside the decisions of some of the Supreme Court judges; and again I will say that the members of the Privy Council are also men of considerable age. The only point left is this: that there is no objection to judges who are of a great age so long as they administer the law in the way the Government want. The objection against the Queensland judges is that they happen to have given some decisions adverse to the Government. Because those decisions are biased, as the hon. member said—that is their opinion—they are to be removed because they are too old, although the argument is that the judges of the High Court of Australia, who are men just as old, are competent to remain.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: He did not say that.

Mr. SIZER: I am afraid the hon. member did say it, but if he did not say it, he left it to be inferred very plainly. At any rate, it does not make any difference whether he said it or not: that is the logical conclusion of what he said. At any rate, it is evident, to my mind, that the Government's intentions, so far as the Supreme Courts Acts Amendment Bill is concerned, is that some ambitious young men of legal mind are anxious to get on to the bench, and no doubt, if the Government have their way, they will find their way there before very, very long. But, fortunately for Queensland, there is another Chamber. (Government laughter.) Evidently an endeavour is going to be made to remove that Chamber. Well, I should

say that if the Government propose to do that, they cannot do it without a referendum, and they have to bear in mind that a referendum was taken on this matter and it was turned down in no uncertain manner. The only way in which they can alter the position is to get a reverse decision from the people. If that is their intention, if that is their method of abolishing the Upper House, I am quite content that the Upper House will long remain.

Mr. COLLINS: The people should not rule, according to your line of argument.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member will remember that two referendums on a different question have been taken of the people of Australia. I am sure that hon. members opposite would have been very, very sore had the Federal Government ignored the result of the first referendum and passed their proposal by statute.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: The "Courier" advocated that it should be done.

Mr. SIZER: The fact remains that it was not done. The fact also remains that the only honourable way in which the Government can deal with this matter is the way in which the Federal Government dealt with the matter they placed before the people.

Mr. FOLEY: Are you an authority on constitutional questions?

Mr. SIZER: I am afraid that if we relied on the hon. member we should pass some most peculiar laws.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SIZER: I just want, in conclusion, to deal with one matter, the action of the Government in regard to which appears to me to be very unfair, and at least does not reflect the grateful feeling of the people of Queensland towards the mother country as I believe it should. That is the matter of the supply of meat. There is no doubt that the State butchers' shops are selling meat more cheaply than private butchers, and there is no doubt that the duty of the Government, and of any Government, is to look to the man lower down. It is the duty of every Government to do that in a legitimate manner, but, as far as the State butchers' shops are concerned, I do not think anyone will deny that they receive an undue advantage over private butchers' shops. It is the duty of the Government to legislate for the majority of the people, but the State butchers' shops only supply meat for about one-tenth of the people at the very outside, so that the Government are not supplying meat for the majority of the people. The Government have made an agreement with the meatworks companies, and if they had been sincere and anxious to supply the majority of the people with cheap meat, why did they prevent private butchers obtaining their meat from the meatworks at the same price as it is supplied to the State butchers' shops? If they allowed private butchers the same advantage as is enjoyed by the State butchers' shops, I am sure the private butchers could sell meat just as cheaply as the Government, and the majority of the people would then be getting cheap meat. But that is not the case at all, and it is amusing to notice that wherever the return of the Government's nominee was in doubt in any way the people were promised a State butcher's shop. The Premier, when in Sandgate, which is a portion of my electorate, informed the people that if they returned my opponent they would get a State butcher's shop. The people of Sandgate.

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however, told the Premier very clearly that they did not want a shop at that price—that they would not pay that price for a shop. They decided to ignore the Premier's pleadings, and since that time we have noticed that the Government have threatened to close a certain shop established in an electorate which transgressed according to their point of view by returning a member to sit on this side of the House. Such action only shows their political prejudice. It is not only carried out as far as State butchers' shops are concerned, but is also carried out in regard to schools. Certain schools were promised in my electorate, and in other electorates, but since the return of members to this House, for some unknown reason, those promises have been withdrawn. The only inference from that is that those electorates transgressed at the election by returning members to this side of the House.

Mr. CARTER: Did they give that reason?

Mr. SIZER: They did not give that reason; they were not honest enough to give that reason. But to return to the matter I was discussing—namely, the supply of cheap meat—I say that the Government have taken undue advantage of their position as agents for the Imperial Government. It should have been the duty of the Government, and of this country generally, to do their utmost for the mother country, and if it were possible to make an agreement for the supply of meat to the Government at 3½d. per lb., it should have been possible to have made that price applicable to the meat supplied to the Imperial Government. It is no use for them to say that the meatworks would not agree to that. The fact remains that they made an agreement for meat to be supplied to State butchers' shops at that low price at the expense of the Imperial Government, which is unfair and ungrateful to a people who are fighting in this war as much for this country as for their own country. It should have been possible to have made such an agreement as would have enabled the Imperial Government to get their meat cheap; the State Government should not, at a time like the present, be getting cheap meat at the expense of the Imperial Government, especially when it is remembered that the people over there are on short rations and are undergoing hardships which we do not experience, and are at the gates of war while we live here in peace and comfort. We have as much to lose in this war as they have, and they have no more to gain from it than we have, and we should do our utmost to assist them; and if it would be an advantage to the Imperial Government and the unfortunate people in Great Britain to get their meat at 3½d. per lb., and we had to pay ½d. per lb. more for our meat in order to allow them to do so, I am sure the people of Queensland would be only too willing to pay that extra ½d.

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

Mr. SIZER: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the way you have carried me on.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I must first of all offer my congratulations to the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. I must also say that we are to be complimented on having new Opposition members who are a

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credit to themselves and the country. I think that as we go along we shall find that when the people have a last say they will realise that, despite the great promises of the Government, there are certain promises that will not be carried out when they have the power to act.

Mr. CARTER: You may be borne out, though.

Mr. CORSER: But I was not borne out. The hon. gentlemen did me a good turn and I reciprocated, and as a result I was not borne out. The hon. member [8.30 p.m.] for Port Curtis came into my electorate, and as that was doing me a good turn, I reciprocated by not going into his. (Laughter.)

Mr. CARTER: You were in my electorate once, and did me a good turn.

Mr. CORSER: One of the things which the Government should do in the interests of the State is to provide for a reduction of members of this House. That reform has been looked for ever since the Federal Parliament was established in Melbourne.

Mr. WHITFORD: Ever since the Labour party came into power.

Mr. CORSER: If anyone looks at the alterations that were made in the numbers of members in the other States they will admit that Queensland has got far too many members in this House.

Mr. SMITH: Why don't you resign?

The TREASURER: There are not too many Liberals.

Mr. CORSER: If we had equal representation in the number of votes cast the Treasurer and his Government might be frightened that they would go out of office. The number of votes cast for the Liberals at the recent elections was practically one-half of the total votes polled. If we had had proportionate representation at the last election, then we would have had a better state of affairs so far as the strength of parties is concerned.

Mr. HARTLEY: We will make Burnett a separate State and then you will be right.

Mr. CORSER: The Burnett is important enough for it. I sincerely hope that the Government will take into consideration the advantages to the electors by the reduction of the number of members in the Assembly. It would be better to reduce the number to forty. We have members sitting here who have only 1,700 names on their electoral rolls, and we have other members who have 11,500 votes on their rolls, and both these members have an equal voice in this House.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is the fault of your Government in the past dragging everything to Brisbane.

Mr. CORSER: Not necessarily. Previously to the late Government going out of office the electoral law was carried out under a Bill which provided for a redistribution of seats from time to time, but that was wiped out. At one time 4,000 votes on a roll was considered something like an equitable basis to work on. Hon. gentlemen who occupy the front Treasury benches claim to be more democratic than the Government they defeated. Why should we have to appeal to them over and over again to make possible an equal value of votes?

Mr. PETERSON: Do you want less country members?

Mr. CORSER: No. If the Government are going to reduce the number of members there are sufficient country members sitting behind the Government to see that the number from the country is not reduced. They should see that we get fair representation for the country.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: If you had one vote one value you would disfranchise the country members.

Mr. CORSER: No. Under a fair electoral system the hon. member knows that fair representation would be given to the country and fair representation to the cities.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: But you want one vote one value.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, and if any section should have a vote it is the section who were deprived of their votes at the last election. During the three years we were in opposition we impressed on the Government the necessity of providing for a vote for our absent soldiers, and time and again we reminded the Government that that provision had not been made. On each occasion the Premier and other members of the Government would try and deceive us by saying that all provision had been made, and it was only necessary for them to poll the vote when it was required. When the elections were hurried on and it was too late to provide for making the vote the Government made provision for the soldiers to vote. When no harm could be done to them they introduced a costly system of voting by proxy.

The TREASURER: Mr. Pritchard said he was quite ready.

Mr. CORSER: If Mr. Pritchard had had all the say there would have been an altered state of affairs in this House to-night. Unfortunately, Mr. Ryan had all the say, and that is the reason why we see things as they are. Mr. Pritchard said he was ready. Well, a game man is always ready. Mr. Pritchard made that statement without the experience of a member of Parliament, and the Premier and members of the Government are now pleased to use it against him. But I am able to say that it was not the leader of the Opposition or any member of Parliament who said that we were ready at that time. How could we be ready without literature or anything else when the Government had got all their orders into the Government Printing Office to execute the tons of literature that went out? The Government had their funds ready and everything else except the provision for the soldiers' vote.

Mr. COLLINS: The 20th December killed you.

Mr. CORSER: What was that?

Mr. CARTER: The time you promised to go to the front.

At twenty-five minutes to 9 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. BERTRAM relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. CORSER: I heard lots of things during the election, and that is another score to the hon. gentleman's discredit. Previous to the elections I made inquiry as to the number of soldiers, nurses, munition workers, etc., absent from Queensland, and I found that there were approximately 47,000 Queensland electors away at that time. I want to know how many of those people were enabled to use the franchise.

The TREASURER: Certainly not the prisoners of war.

Mr. CORSER: The prisoners of war would not represent one-half per cent. I find, so far as I have been able to gather, that there were 900 or more electors out of my electorate, and I have got their names with me. I would not like to say that 100 of these people were given a vote. Owing to representations that were made, and which I was pleased to have some say in, the Government agreed to put on the roll those lads who had been away about two years from Queensland. There was no provision for them to get on the roll, but on the 12th February it was agreed that the electoral officer should sign an application form for these soldiers.

The TREASURER: And they were put on the roll.

Mr. CORSER: Yes, there were 124 in my electorate put on the roll in that way, and twenty-seven of them had no vote at all. Two of my brothers had no votes, and they did not have the opportunity to vote at all. I know one lad, a pronounced Labourite, who had no vote, and another a Nationalist. A father living in my electorate had two sons who returned from the war, and when the elder went to the polling-booth he found he had no vote. The younger man was not on the roll. The Government claimed that they had a soldiers' roll, and put all those who were entitled to vote on the roll. I can give other instances of the way the proxy vote was used.

The TREASURER: If all those fellows had exercised their votes, where would you be?

Mr. HARTLEY: On his farm.

Mr. CORSER: If the Opposition received the benefit of the absent soldiers' votes that they should do, then we would know where we would be.

The TREASURER: In the soup.

Mr. CORSER: There are other instances that I will give, even if they are offhand ones. There are farmers in my district who received proxies from their sons on the Wednesday after the elections. They were not delivered to them until three days after the poll.

The TREASURER: We do not control the Post Office.

Mr. CORSER: But you control the regulations which enabled those proxies to be placed in the post office in time to get there before the poll. You had three years to make provision for the proxies to get to that farmer in time, and three days after the poll had closed this father received his sons' proxies.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: A lucky thing for you.

Mr. CORSER: That might sound all right, but if you saw the letters I have received from these parents you would not think so. I have other instances of wives of absent soldiers who received the proxies from their husbands after the poll had been taken. In all justice, whether these votes were for the Government or against them, it is only fair that provision should have been made to give these young fellows a vote. Could not their nominations of proxies have been taken twelve months ago? Could we not make provision now for proxies to be held by the friends of these absent soldiers so that they could vote at any time, whether it be for a referendum or anything else? If there is one side which will be prepared to abide by the

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votes of the soldiers it is the Opposition. Government members, during the election campaign, went round the country telling the people that we were opposed to giving these absent soldiers a vote when they knew we voted in this House, in 1914, to provide them with two votes.

I notice in the Governor's Speech that there is to be some tampering with the judges. I have been thinking this over. I have not been before the "beak" myself, but one never knows what might happen if he stays here too long. Looking back, it strikes me that the Government's policy speech was written at St. Helena. Very probably the Premier had a deputation there, and made a promise to those people, too. I was just wondering whether those people, whom the Premier wished to get on his side, had a deputation to him to get even with the judges, and probably that is why he is introducing this measure. If there is any section of the community that is going to be pleased with the tampering with our judges, it will certainly be those who are serving sentences.

Mr. CARTER: They are all Liberals down there.

Mr. CORSER: That is why you did not give them a vote. (Laughter.)

I notice there is also some provision for tampering with the other Chamber.

Mr. CARTER: We do not want to tamper with it. We want to get rid of it.

Mr. CORSER: I want to make myself clear on this point. As far as the Upper House is concerned, at the present time it is a most undemocratic Chamber in so far as regards the manner in which appointments can be made. It is possibly the worst system that we could have, and it is not the first time I have said it, either in this House or outside. I believe in an Upper Chamber, but I believe in a fair and reasonable franchise.

Mr. CARTER: A broad franchise.

Mr. CORSER: It all depends on what you mean by that phrase.

Mr. CARTER: I mean "One individual one vote."

Mr. CORSER: I have just shown where you denied some individuals a vote.

Mr. CARTER: I have not denied anyone a vote.

Mr. CORSER: But those who have the say have done so. I think we might well provide for an alteration in the Upper House, and make it elective.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is against a plank in the Liberal platform, "No interference with the Upper House," and I can show it to you in black and white.

Mr. CORSER: Fortunately, we in the Opposition are able to think for ourselves. We are allowed a free hand, and can speak what we think.

Mr. CARTER: That is why there are so few of you there. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: There are better times ahead, when people will see that we do think what we speak, and when they will begin to realise that the Government do not think that which they say. I sincerely hope that the Government will, at an early date, introduce a measure to provide for an elective

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Upper House on a reasonable franchise. Sooner than have a continuation of the Upper House as it is at present, I would see it wiped out altogether.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! Come over here.

Mr. CORSER: And whilst I say that—

Mr. CARTER: You do not mean it.

Mr. CORSER: I look back to the amount of work that that Chamber has done in the interests of the people of the State, and I look back to the amount of good it has done for the country constituencies. Once you wipe it out I am afraid we will be in the soup altogether. If the Government are going to introduce a measure for an elective Upper House, then they will get very strong support in this Chamber.

I notice that it is proposed to amend the Elections Act. If there is any Act in Queensland that wants amending it is the Elections Act. No doubt, a majority of the electors voted for the Government, but not in proportion to the number of seats they hold. The Act provides, as was evident at the last elections, and which appears to have been admitted by the Assistant Minister for Justice—it provides for double voting, and it provides for roll-stuffing to some degree. We have stated that for three years, but for three years nothing has been done.

Mr. PETERSON: How many duplicates were there in your electorate?

Mr. CORSER: Three that I know of; all good Labourites, and they all voted Labour twice, and if there are any inquiries to be made I shall be very pleased to give the Treasurer the names so that justice will be done.

Mr. KIRWAN: You know what happened in 1913, when there was all the talk about double voting. They all voted for your side.

Mr. CORSER: That was when you lost all your tribunal cases.

Mr. KIRWAN: No. You ought to be careful, you know.

Mr. CORSER: If the Government are in earnest in their proposal to amend the Elections Act, they are going to get very great support from us.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is only when we touch your pockets that we get your opposition.

Mr. CORSER: My pocket has been touched long ago. I find that there is a State Enterprises Bill to be brought forward, and it was very interesting to hear the mover of the Address in Reply say that State enterprises were to be put under non-political control. That is not in keeping with the policy of the followers of the Government.

The TREASURER: I am afraid you misunderstood him.

Mr. CORSER: I am afraid "Hansard" will not misunderstand him. I noticed Ministers when the hon. member made that statement, and their faces did not indicate that they believed in that, or that their followers would allow them to believe in it, and particularly the Treasurer.

Mr. KIRWAN: What is wrong with the last commission that they appointed?

Mr. CORSER: I can assure the hon. member that I do not know what was wrong with the last commission, but I do not see where

£200,000 has been saved to the State. The State enterprises are to be placed under non-political control.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: You are beginning to dream dreams.

Mr. CORSER: I am. I am beginning to think things. (Laughter.) And from the remarks of the mover of the Address in Reply, it would appear that the hon. gentleman is available for something pretty big.

Mr. CARTER: You think he would be a fit person for the job, anyhow.

Mr. CORSER: He has not the chief qualification for the job if it is to be non-political.

I also note that the mover of the Address in Reply claimed that the State should have a say in the fixation of the price of butter in Queensland. To-day the State may have no representation on the Commonwealth board for fixing prices, but the farmers have direct representation on that board, and consequently they are able to secure a fair price for their butter. When the State Government had control we had no such representation. I would far rather see a continuation of the system of representation of the farmers than I would see representation of the State Government.

I notice also that the Marsupials Act is to be amended. I hope that the amending Bill will make provision for the assessment of Government cattle for the purposes of the Act.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: The State stations pay marsupial assessment now, just the same as private stockowners.

Mr. CORSER: Well, in this Chamber last session the hon. gentleman stated that neither rates nor rent were paid by the State stations.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: I said that they paid marsupial rates.

Mr. CORSER: The Auditor-General reports that they pay no rates.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: No municipal or shire council rates.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman did not make any such qualification, according to "Hansard." Did the hon. gentleman deceive both this House and the people last session?

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: The State stations have always paid marsupial assessment.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman then claimed that they paid neither rates nor rent. Then, we are promised a Bill to amend the Land Acts, 1910-1917. Will that Bill contain a provision for the payment of local government rates by the Government?

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: I never said so.

Mr. CORSER: I know the hon. gentleman never said so, but I hope some provision will be made, either in that Bill or in the Bill to amend the Local Authorities Act, for the Crown giving some assistance to the local authorities.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Are you quite clear now as to what I said?

Mr. CORSER: I will quote from "Hansard" what the hon. gentleman did say on

the subject. On 19th July last the hon. member for Carnarvon asked the Chief Secretary—

"What rates and taxes have the Government paid, or are due to be paid, on their State station, Mount Hutton—

1. Shire council rates?
2. Marsupial rates?
3. Rabbit board rates?
4. Brands Act assessment?
5. Diseases in Stock Act assessment?
6. Licensed gate fees?
7. Rent to the Crown?
8. Land tax (leasehold) to Federal Government?
9. Income tax to Federal Government?
10. Income tax to State Government?
11. Workers' Insurance Act?
12. Subscriptions to local hospital?
13. Interest on rabbit net fencing?
14. Tobacco license to sell to station hands?"

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

"The hon. member should have addressed this question to the Secretary for Public Lands. The answer is as follows:—

1 to 6. None.

7. The same rent as paid by previous lessee.

8 to 14. Eleven exclusive. See answer to 1 to 6.

11. Similar premiums as that paid by the honourable gentleman to the State Insurance Office."

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: The chances are that Mount Hutton paid none of those rates and taxes. We only held Mount Hutton for a short while, and the chances are that we never paid any.

Mr. CORSER: However, there is the reply we received.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: That may have been perfectly true of Mount Hutton, but it might not be true of any other property.

Mr. CORSER: These things ought to be true when they are reported in "Hansard" in answer to questions put by hon. members. If it is true that the Government do not pay any of these things, then I sincerely hope that provision will be made in one of the amending Bills for them to do so.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: That may be quite true of Mount Hutton.

Mr. CORSER: We have doubted replies given by the Government, and now the hon. gentleman doubts his own answer.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You are quibbling.

Mr. CORSER: I am not; and that reply does not enable the Minister to quibble.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Ask about another property.

Mr. CORSER: We remember that the Minister increased the value of the lease of Mount Hutton by a large amount. We remember also that the Auditor-

[9 p.m.] General said that the increased price for the lease was to be added to the value of the land, and would have to be paid for by the settlers who came afterwards.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: The Minister said it was not true, and it is not.

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Mr. CORSER: That is what the Auditor-General said.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: No; he said it was quite possible it would be done, but it is not being done.

Mr. CORSER: Then you have a right to reprimand him.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: You do it.

Mr. CORSER: We will do it very soon if we get over to that side. (Government laughter.) This land is now being made available for the returned soldiers, and the Minister makes out that the Auditor-General was wrong, and that the increased value is not going to be added to the land.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: I think you will find that a qualified statement was made.

Mr. CORSER: I have twice told what statement was made, and the Minister knows what statement was made. He knows that what I say is true.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: No, it is not; it is not being added to the lease.

Mr. CORSER: Who is paying for it?

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: You are paying for it.

Mr. CORSER: I know we are. Every farmer is paying for it, and will have to continue paying for the blunders of the Government, for the result of the bang-tailed muster which has not come about. When the Government are amending the Land Act, they should in all seriousness consider the representations being made by us on this side, and take into account the warning we have given them of the dangers to Queensland owing to the ever increasing spread of prickly-pear. Areas that three years ago had no pear on them are to-day becoming heavily infested. The Minister will bear me out in saying that the records of his department show that 1,000,000 acres are being infested every year.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: I do not think so. That is what the experts say; one of them.

Mr. CORSER: A million acres are being infested every year.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Do you agree with that?

Mr. CORSER: We do not usually have to admit what the Government say. The Minister knows it is spreading fast. There are areas being infested to-day of men who have given the best that is in them to rid their lands of pear, whose wives and children have worked long hours in the endeavour to rid their property of pear, and these people, broken down in health, are being driven off their land to-day, with their land mortgaged, because of the continued reinfestation of Crown lands. It is the good areas of Queensland and the large tracts of country that is being infested every day which should receive some consideration. It is not right for the Government to hide behind the late Government. Our experience of our land laws in connection with prickly-pear selections shows that the conditions which it was hoped were lenient enough have not proved too beneficial to settlers.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: They are much more lenient than any other Government ever gave them.

Mr. CORSER: They want to be more lenient. We had considered the idea previous to the going out of the late Government of making the conditions easier. The

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present Government have extended the time for payment, but why should we ask for payment on these lands? Should we not think more of clearing the lands that surround them? These settlers are forced off their farms because the Crown do not clear their own land. There is no more important subject to-day for this House to consider than to take into account the big asset we are losing in Queensland by the increase of this pest to the extent of 1,000,000 acres a year—say, 1,000,000 acres at £3 an acre.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: That is a splendid advertisement for Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: We must not try to conceal in this House the truth that Queensland is becoming more heavily infested every day with prickly-pear, and the Government are taking no action. There seems to be no indication in the Speech of the slightest assistance to be given to these people, who are broken and disheartened by an endeavour to do the best for themselves and to make good on land on which they have lost their health and money.

Mr. PETERSON: What is your remedy?

Mr. CORSER: My remedy is to take into account the experience of poor farmers, the experience of both sides of this House, and thoroughly discuss the matter. We should get away from party politics and consider the matter from the point of view of the best advantage to the State.

Mr. PETERSON: But that is not a remedy. I want to assist you, not to criticise.

Mr. CORSER: It is a means of bringing about a remedy. The hon. member and the Government can depend on this side trying to do something to eradicate this pest. Getting back to the other portion of this land discussion, I have here the Auditor-General's report, and I find the following on page 24—

"The selectors who take up Mount Hutton will have to carry the load of this additional amount that has been placed upon it."

Is not that sufficient evidence for the Minister. I have given what the Auditor-General says, the Minister's own statement in "Hansard," and the facts and figures. Is the Minister not going to agree to them?

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: You want to read that part of the report you have dropped.

Mr. CORSER: I only wish we had had a chance of reading it to the people at the elections.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They were not game to give us a chance.

Mr. CORSER: They did not give us time. I notice also that the Government propose to tamper with the Brisbane tramways—we have a Brisbane Tramways Fares Bill. That is a good election cry. The Government do not find the money; it does not matter to them; it is popular; never mind whether it is just or not. I do not know much about the fares. They seem to be pretty well the same as they are in the other States; nothing to cry about very much. If it is necessary to reduce fares, and it is possible, well then, do it.

Then there is a Brisbane Tramways Purchase Bill. If the Government are not able to build railways and fulfil promises made to the people in agricultural districts, why do they want to provide for the purchase of the Brisbane tramways? Surely the comforts provided in the city are sufficient with-

out the Government wasting money and depriving other districts of railways which have been promised—districts which have been settled by selectors believing that a railway was to go there. I do not know that there is any immediate necessity for the purchase of this tramway. Things are going on very well. It is a very creditable system so far as we can see, and I do not see why the Government want to waste this money—and certainly the time of this House.

I notice, further, that the Government contemplate going on with the Steel and Iron Works Bill. Last year a State Steel and Iron Works Bill was introduced—we have heard a lot about “steal” Bills in here—and it was passed here, and it passed the other House with an amendment which, I think, provided that the expenditure should be limited to £150,000. When hon. members went into the electorates, what did they say? That the Opposition voted against the Steel and Iron Works Bill.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Near enough.

Mr. CORSER: It was near enough. In my electorate the Premier was asked whether the hon. member for Burnett voted for it. “Well,” he said, “if he did, he was an exception.” I will tell you what I was able to tell them—that every member on this side of the House gave his consent and voted for the Bill. No division was taken at all, and yet the Government and the Premier will go out into the country and say anything to deceive the people.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Speak one way and vote the other.

Mr. CORSER: I have not been contaminated yet, I was going to say, by sitting next to the Minister, but I notice that the Minister for Lands is sitting there. (Laughter.) I notice that the Government appear to be taking some suggestions that were made to them by the Upper House on the last occasion, because I find that it is not a State Steel and Iron Works Bill they propose to introduce. It is recommended that—

“steps be taken to establish a State iron-smelting plant capable of producing pig-iron commercially.”

Now, there is a big difference in that. We advocated, the Upper House advocated and urged, the establishment of works for the production of pig-iron. All we suggested was the deletion of the provision for the establishment of steel works, because it would require millions of money and years of experience. So a limit of £100,000 or £200,000, as the case may be, was provided as the cost for one year, to enable it to be started. The Government would not accept the amendment, because they said they would not be able to establish ironworks without unlimited funds. They threw the Bill out, and they have done nothing.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They said they were going to do it without the Bill.

Mr. CORSER: They have done nothing but test a few tons of ore that was tested by private enterprise long before the Government thought of it. That is not the reason why the Government threw out the Bill. That State Iron and Steel Works Bill provided also for the commandeering of other industries that might deal with iron—ships, Walkers Limited, any of your hardware establishments. The whole of the iron industry was likely to be commandeered—seized by the State—had that Bill passed through;

and because it was amended they threw it out rather than establish pig-iron works. Now, after the elections, they come along with a suggestion that they are going to reintroduce it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Thinking about it.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Meanwhile, we are making it.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member must know that only fifty bags or 50 tons of ore went through. That was an experiment. I saw it going, and it went just during election time, so that the electors could say, “Look at what the Government are doing; they have made a start.” They put it in a furnace and blew it up—so that they could tell the people they were starting on it without their Steel and Iron Works Bill.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Blew up the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: Maybe; but it will come down again, I can assure you. We also find that some provision is made for the continued trial at Roma for mineral oil, and they are getting to the depth at which they hope to find gas.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: They have got to a shallower depth than you and Vowles.

Mr. CORSER: Well, they got a lot of it from you.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: It will be a valuable asset if we can find oil there. It may be well to look into the history of oil-boring in Australia, and take into account the number of times that some little thing has occurred to prevent our obtaining what we want. We had oil there—or gas. Something happened. The casing went down or the gas caught fire, and before it was put out a great deal of damage was done. It is to be hoped that if the Government strike it again every care will be taken. Something seems to stand in the way of our finding this very fine commodity which would be so useful to Queensland.

The Government also made the Governor say these things—no wonder he did not want a crowd to listen to him—

“These awards and agreements have had the effect of placing the remuneration of public servants on a more equitable basis, and of greatly improving their general conditions. As a consequence, the service is much more contented now than it ever was before.”

That is a statement they make with their tongues in their cheeks, and I suppose that when the statement was made in the other Chamber, even the late Minister for Lands could not help smiling.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: I was not there to hear it. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: Our State service has never been so unsettled as it is at the present time. The members of the service are on their hind legs, and saying all sorts of things about the way they have been treated by the Government, and asking for consideration. There is a very big problem facing the Government as far as the public service is concerned. It is not a fair thing to give one branch of the service increases which other branches do not get, and it is high time that the service bucked about such administration. The Government should recognise the disabilities under which some public servants are working, and should take

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the Opposition into their confidence, because the Opposition, with the experience they have had, might be able to do a lot to assist that section of the community which requires assistance.

The TREASURER: You deferred the automatic increases and we paid them.

Mr. CORSER: But we provided the funds which enabled the present Government to pay those increases, and we promised to pay them, provided the money was in the Treasury. I notice also that the Government are making a great blow about what they are doing for the farmers in establishing a produce agency business. The measure providing for the establishment of that agency was passed with the aid of the Opposition, and with amendments which they proposed, but which had to be inserted in the other House.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: Those are the only bad things in the Act.

Mr. CORSER: The Act makes provision for the Government carrying on produce agencies, and the Secretary for Agriculture admitted, as is shown by "Hansard," that the Government were very loth to do anything to the detriment of co-operative enterprise, but were bound by their policy speech to do it. I sincerely hope that during this session we shall have an opportunity, as an Opposition, of getting some suggestions embodied in Bills. Very rarely did the present Government accept an amendment from this side of the House during the past three years. The Opposition have intelligence with regard to the matters submitted to the House, and there is no reason why their suggestions should not receive consideration. It is interesting to note that, during the past three years, not on a single occasion did a member supporting the Government vote with the Opposition.

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: That is a dreadful reflection on the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: It is not a dreadful reflection on the Opposition, but it is a reflection on the Government and their supporters.

Question put.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I have had the opportunity on many occasions of being present in this House when the Address in Reply has been under consideration, and I confess that I have never at any time seen such discourtesy as has been shown this afternoon by members of the Government party in not replying to the leaders of the Opposition and other members on this side who have spoken in this debate. Such conduct indicates that the arguments which have been used by members on this side of the House cannot be answered by members opposite, and that is one of the reasons why we have had no Government member following hon. members who have spoken. I am inclined to think that after I have finished to-night some member opposite will be anxious to get up and reply to some of the things I am going to say, for I am going to hit right out from the shoulder. Personally, I was not prepared to speak to-night, but rather than allow the question to go through I am determined to have something to say in connection with the affairs of the State. I heard the Treasurer interject, in regard to the amount of money that was paid to the public servants just about the time we went

out of office, that the present Government got the money, and not the late Government.

The TREASURER: I said you deferred paying the automatic increases, and that we paid them.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is correct in saying that we deferred paying the automatic increases, but he is not correct when he tries to draw a red herring across the trail. I shall quote from "Hansard" to show that it was the financing of the late Government which enabled the present Government to pay those increases, and that they would have been paid if the late Government had remained in office. No doubt the hon. gentleman has perused the correspondence on this subject which is in the Treasury. The then Under Secretary to the Treasury drew attention to the state of the finances at the end of that year, and proposed certain things which I as Treasurer did not agree with, and I replied to Mr. Fowles that it was only apparent towards the end of the financial year that we were going to be in a position to pay those increases. What would have happened if we had paid the increases at that particular time, which was the eve of an election? Though the money was then in sight, if we had said we were going to pay those increases we should have been charged, and very justly, with seeking to buy the voters, especially the voters in the public service. More recent events have proved that there have been some gentlemen in public positions, and sitting on the Treasury bench, who have not had such delicate feelings in regard to matters of that kind. I shall quote from page 1273 of "Hansard" for 1914—

"Hon. members in perusing the Estimates will notice that no increases are provided for any officers of the State; but whilst this is so, I am pleased to inform hon. members that no reductions have been made in salaries. (Hear, hear!) Before the war broke out it had been arranged that the usual automatic increases should be given, whilst all branches of the service would, in all probability, have obtained increases. In connection with the Railways and Education Departments, some considerable improvements in salary had been decided upon. The effect of the war on our finances made it imperative that the Government's intentions in this direction be abandoned; those interested will, therefore, have to await a more favourable opportunity. I desire, however, to inform hon. members that, should circumstances warrant it, the claims of all officers concerned will be at once dealt with. (Hear, hear!)"

The TREASURER: They were not paid.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Let me remind hon. members that as a result of our careful financing, they were paid, and it was the only time since this Government has been in office that they had a surplus.

[9.30 p.m.] That surplus was arranged and provided for them during the eleven months of the financial year that we were in office, and it was the only time that the hon. gentleman had a surplus since he has been in office.

The TREASURER: No.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I apologise to the hon. member. There was a paper surplus on one other occasion. But they were faked

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figures, and the Auditor-General drew attention to the fact that certain accounts had accrued in connection with the Railway Department that had been held back in order to produce a surplus.

The TREASURER: Because the acquitted vouchers had not reached the Treasury.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman does not like what is the absolute truth. Anyone can produce a surplus on those lines. Let me say that it is the only surplus which was produced by hon gentlemen opposite since they have been on the Treasury benches. I shall be compelled in my speech to-night to make remarks that are not very condensed, but I am going to have my say. I want first of all to deal with a matter of deep interest to my electors. I refer now to the deputation which waited upon the Hon. the Minister for Public Lands, Mr. Hunter, in connection with the State butcher's shop at Wynnum. It was amusing to find the way in which the Minister who received that deputation tried to dodge the whole business. Prior to the elections certain things were done in connection with the Bulimba electorate to try to get the votes of those particular electors. One of the things that was done was done in a great hurry. I believe that if the records were looked up it would be found that in order to get the butcher's shop established in Hawthorne just in time for the election they had a considerable amount of overtime to pay to workers. It was stated in Wynnum, "If you do not return a man of the right brand, your butcher's shop will be taken away from you." Some of the writers to the "Daily Standard" have been drawing attention to it, and they stated: "If you are making it hot for those who voted National, you are also making it hot for the other fellow." But, apparently, the idea of public morality on the part of the Minister for Lands in that connection does not matter one bit. It seems to me that it is only in keeping with what the Government have been doing ever since they have been in office. It does not matter a straw what they do so long as in some way they get the benefit.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The late Minister for Lands is as honest as any man.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not saying anything about his honesty, but I was referring to his political devious ways in connection with the State meat shops. I believe that when the answers are given on Tuesday next to the questions which I asked to-day, it will be found that the proposal with regard to the State meat shops was all fireworks. The premises were leased for three years, yet one of the arguments used in connection with the matter was that it was not a suitable shop. It is most marvellous that they did not discover that it was not suitable before they commenced business there. It was found not to be suitable when a man was returned for Bulimba by a large number of Labour-National voters, and that that man did not have the right brand on him. That was one of the ways of punishing the people there. They were told that they were going to be put across the Government's knee, politically, and given a whacking. So the proposal was made to remove the State meat shop. The Hon. Minister for Public Lands, Mr. Hunter, wanted to find out exactly my own view with regard to it, but I was able to meet him there. I would not give him any satisfaction.

The Minister descended to that before a deputation of respectable men. It does not follow that when a member of Parliament takes a deputation to a Minister that he is going to agree in every detail with what the deputation put forward, and that is no reason why he is to be cross-questioned about his own attitude in regard to it. The late Minister for Public Lands prostituted his position on that occasion in regard to the attitude he adopted towards that deputation of working men who were interested in that meat shop. It seems to me that when a Government will descend to that sort of thing there is something wrong in the political life of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you ever ask a member who submitted a matter for your consideration whilst you were a Minister, as to what his opinion about the question was?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I never tried to bait any member, and I never tried to bait the present Minister for Public Lands, because I do not think he would adopt that attitude towards any deputation.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: My own idea is that the whole thing was what you might call a theatrical act on the part of the Government. They wanted to see if they could get at the new member for Bulimba, and they wanted to get an expression of opinion from him, but they failed hopelessly. The public of Queensland will admit that I was good enough for the Vice-President of the Executive Council, Mr. Hunter, on that occasion.

The TREASURER: Are you prepared to give us your opinion on it now?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quite as capable of holding up my own end of the stick as the Treasurer is, and he will find that out before I have done to-night. I might tell him that I am going to take off the gloves to-night.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and laughter.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going to refer to certain things which have been tried to be glossed over by a certain section of the community. I am going to hit right out to-night, whatever the consequences may be. (Hear, hear!) I notice in the Speech that there are patriotic references. My word, the patriotic references have been slow in coming, and they have been very much like what has been the attitude of many of the Ministers—I don't say all of them. There have been notable exceptions, but many of the Ministers have absolutely abstained from giving one word of welcome to the boys who have been fighting our battles at the front. They have hidden behind something—have been afraid to come out from under cover in order to welcome the men who have been fighting the battles of the Empire.

The TREASURER: There has been a Minister present every time the soldiers returned. That is different to what they do in the other States.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman may be perfectly right in saying that. But I would remind him that there are some other Ministers who have dodged these meetings, and tried to get out of the business.

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They have dodged them in other ways, and I will tell you how before I have finished.

The TREASURER: The Ministers in Victoria and New South Wales never meet the returned soldiers.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Surely we are not going to follow what the Ministers in New South Wales and Victoria do! I take it that when men are brave enough and game enough to fight for us, then it is up to the men who applaud from the platform to go and meet them when they return. There has been too much of clapping fellows on the back when they have gone away and leaving them to their own resources when they get back, just as we find the Minister for Education is grumbling over the expenditure of a little money in connection with the Soldiers' Industrial Institute. I met a soldier the other day—a trade unionist, too—and I found that he had taken off his very badge. He did it because he said he could not get work with his badge on; that people would not employ him.

The TREASURER: What were the private employers doing?

HON. W. H. BARNES: My private advice to him was that every man should keep his badge on.

The TREASURER: What were the private employers doing?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Government at least have not shown the way in that regard.

The TREASURER: Yes, they have.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They have not shown the way to private employers, and yet we find here a Speech that presumably is loyal, put into the hands of His Excellency the Governor, and I want to ask: Has a change come over some of the hon. members on the opposite side? Why, there have been sitting on the front Treasury bench to-night and to-day men who publicly stated that England was the home of cant and humbug, and that if men were sent home from here they were going to be sent home not to fight the nation's battle in France and in Flanders, but they were going somewhere else to fight someone else. And let me remind hon. members that those members have never withdrawn one of those statements. My remarks do not apply to every member of the Cabinet, but there are members of the Cabinet who have broken their oath of office, and they have done the mean and contemptible thing by the Empire of which we form a part; and I do not hesitate, in speaking of it, to say that no man—I do not care who he is—is fit to occupy a position of that kind until he makes good any statements he has made with regard to the Empire and with regard to recruiting.

HON. W. N. GILLIES: That settles it, if you say so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is no hon. member sitting on the other side who can refute the statements I have made in that direction.

The TREASURER: You do not know what you are talking about.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Would not the hon. member like to be able to draw a veil over those utterances which appeared in quite a number of papers?

The TREASURER: What did the people of Queensland say on the 16th March?

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HON. W. H. BARNES: I will tell the hon. member what the people said. I am glad the hon. member has given me this opportunity. We heard the hon. member who moved the Address in Reply. I take this opportunity of congratulating him on his speech. We heard that hon. member speaking about the vote. Shall I tell you how that vote was got? In my electorate an old cartoon which came from the Government Printing Office—was printed there—and I think I am right in saying it had the Treasurer's name on it—it had at one period—was distributed showing myself hand in hand with the Kaiser with regard to certain dredges. Instructions were issued by the Government, "Whatever you do, only let that particular cartoon get into the Bulimba electorate. Whatever you do, keep it away from the Logan. Wherever there are any German electors keep it away, because it is going to do us a great deal of harm. We want on the one hand to try and show that we are extreme loyalists, and on the other hand we want to fondle and nurse to our bosom the German constituents; to make them believe that we are their friends and no one else." Now, the hon. member wants to know how they got there. I will tell him. I am not here to say that all men of German nationality are disloyal. I am not going to make that absurd statement. Many of them are just as loyal as I am, but I am going to tell hon. members opposite how they got there—by banding together with the I.W.W. (Government laughter.)

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The Sinn Feiners.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, the disloyalists of the community and the Sinn Feiners, etc. Everybody they could get hold of in that particular regard they nursed to their bosoms, and to-day we may say the Cabinet and members on the opposite side are representatives of the disloyalists in the community.

The TREASURER: A very thin statement.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It may be a thin statement, but it is a very true statement, and one that the hon. gentleman does not like.

The TREASURER: Billy Hughes worked that out last year.

MR. KIRWAN: Do you mean to state that a majority of the people of Queensland are disloyal?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think I can say, too, that at the present moment the hon. member has got into a tight corner, because I find his masters are speaking, judging by the "Standard." I was talking about the question of loyalty, but his masters are speaking, as I find in the "Standard" report this evening. It says certain resolutions were carried at a meeting held yesterday, and they read as follows:—

"1. That, inasmuch that the workers provide the blood and treasure to wage and pay for all wars, war is always the enemy of the workers of every land.

"2. That we, the workers, always lose in every war no matter which side to the quarrel wins.

"3. That, therefore, the sole interest of the workers of all countries lies in stopping the present war.

"4. That we demand, therefore, that the Empire, of which Australia is part, shall at once endeavour to secure an armistice upon all fronts with a view to

opening immediately negotiations for peace on the basis of 'no indemnities and no annexations.'

"5. That we declare it our sincere belief that any member of the Labour movement in this State, whether attached to the parliamentary, political, or industrial wing of the movement, who appears upon the recruiting platform or in any other way does any other act involving any further participation in the war by Australia, fails to correctly interpret the views of the workers upon this question, and displays lamentable ignorance of the fundamental principles of the working-class movement."

It shows that if an attempt is made to move along a certain direction the outside whip that controls this House, as far as the Government side is concerned, is immediately brought into operation.

It is the duty of every party, whatever their name may be, to provide for the needs of the community and especially the needs of the weakest in the community.

I hope, in connection with the City of Brisbane Bill, to which reference has been made in the Speech, that provision will be made for dealing with some of the needs of the city and suburbs as far as housing is concerned. I do not hesitate to say that there are buildings in certain districts which are a disgrace to the people who erected them and who are getting rentals out of them. There is no chance for child life to develop under such conditions, and I certainly think provision should be made—especially where we have fairly large areas of land in the suburbs—for not allowing lands to be cut up in, say, less than 32-perch lots. I believe 16 perches are not sufficient in this country for anyone to build a home on.

HON. W. N. GILLIES: When did you arrive at that conclusion?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have advocated that policy for years, and I have never deviated from it, and I appeal to hon. members to take some action in this direction. Only a very short distance from where I am speaking there are buildings which, if they were not occupied by any children, would be all the better if a firestick were applied to them. They ought to be burned to the ground. If they were, it would be a good thing for the community.

MR. LLOYD: Are they insured in the State Insurance Office? (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not know. They may be insured there, but all the same I do not hesitate to say that that is what should be done to those buildings.

Having said that, I want to direct the attention of the House to the fact that, whilst there is great anxiety on the part of the Government to get votes, that anxiety does not manifest itself in other directions. For instance, we have an asylum for the insane at Goodna. Some three years ago the laundry at that asylum was burned down. During the election campaign someone said, "Ah, but it makes no difference, because they have no votes." My reply was that I thought there were sufficient people outside that institution who, perhaps, were not capable of exercising the franchise properly without adding to their number by giving votes to

the people inside the institution. But the fact remains that the Government, who are supposed to have bowels of compassion towards those whose needs are the greatest, apparently because those people have no votes, are prepared to allow that laundry to remain in the same position for three years.

THE TREASURER: I think we have spent £50,000 on the hospitals for the insane during the last three years.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And what did the previous Government spend on those asylums during the same period? They were not behind in that regard.

It is absolutely necessary that the State should supplement the provision it is making for the returned men who have been at the front. It seems to me that there is a weakness—I am not blaming the Government in this regard—in connection with the assistance that is being given to the wives and children who have lost their breadwinners at the front. Let me illustrate what I mean. Only this week two wives have come to me, one with a little child about one year and five months old. The woman was weak and sickly, and practically quite unable to continue to battle for herself without receiving more assistance than she is getting to-day. Then there are women with girls of fifteen or sixteen years of age and others who are coming on. The State should wake up and make provision for helping women of that kind with a view to giving their children a start in the community as some recompense for what they have suffered for the Empire.

THE TREASURER: We voted £130,000 last year for State children where you only voted £70,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It may happen that there are more orphans to-day than there were when we were in office. But, granting that the Government voted £130,000, that is no reason why that sum should be the Alpha and Omega in the business.

THE TREASURER: We do not say so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I say emphatically from this side of the House that there is a responsibility resting upon us to make provision for those who are least able to help themselves, and we should not hesitate to deal with the matter.

The hon. member for Logan made some comment with reference to finance. If I followed the hon. member correctly, he blamed those in another place for not passing certain financial measures of the Government for the probable deficiency with which the Treasurer is faced on 30th June next. Now, I want to ask the Treasurer if it is not a fact that, so far as he can foresee, the income tax and land tax are likely to yield as much as the hon. gentleman expected to realise from the measures to which I have alluded.

THE TREASURER: My estimate may be realised, but I estimated a deficit of £495,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is sidestepping. As a matter of fact, he put down a certain estimate, plus what he expected to get from increased taxation.

THE TREASURER: Not at all. In addition to my Estimates, I stated that, if the financial proposals of the Government went through, I expected to get another £500,000.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to ask the hon. gentleman if he is not going to get pretty well that amount, although his financial proposals were not passed. The point I wish to make is that any deficit there may be is not brought about through any failure on the part of the Legislative Council to pass those measures. I think I am safe in saying that it is brought about by recklessness on the part of the Government.

The TREASURER: No; by unavoidable expenditure.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is easy to put it down to unavoidable expenditure. We all know there has been avoidable expenditure in the direction of what may be called speculative enterprises.

The TREASURER: That is debited to the trust funds.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Some of it is debited to the trust funds, and perhaps the hon. gentleman will like me to tell him what I think about the trust funds. But I do not think it would be wise, from my place in the House to-night, to tell him what I think on that subject. I think the hon. gentleman would like it to stop at that.

The TREASURER: You will have ample opportunity later on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Let me say at once that any man who stood up in this House at the present time and disclosed the actual state of the trust funds would not be doing the Government a kindness.

The TREASURER: You would find them a lot better than you left them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. I have followed them very closely, and I have noticed that there has been a good deal of what you might call bookkeeping in connection with the trust funds—opening fresh accounts and making the trust funds improve by that method. I have followed the matter closely, even though I have not been in Parliament, and I know exactly what has been going on.

The TREASURER: We liquidated £50,000 worth of bad debts that you left us.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; we left the hon. gentleman with a big sum in absolute gold. There was £350,000 in gold in the Treasury when we left office.

The TREASURER: Eating its head off. We shovelled it out.

HON. W. H. BARNES: My word, yes; and the hon. gentleman will shovel and shovel until he leaves the State absolutely stranded. That is his policy.

The TREASURER: You had £150,000 in gold and thirty-five policemen looking after it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman may want to know why that gold was there. Well, the Federal Government at one time said that if we found a certain sum in gold they would find us notes representing four times that amount.

The TREASURER: They did not carry that out.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That gold was intended to prevent anything like general unemployment in the State.

The TREASURER: And you blame us for getting rid of it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quite sure there is no need to say anything on those lines. The Treasurer has piled on taxation at every point, and he so arranged things

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that Queensland is about the most heavily taxed State of the whole in the Commonwealth at present.

The TREASURER: It is not the heaviest taxed. There is a much stiffer income tax in New South Wales.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows that Queensland is about the heaviest taxed State in the Commonwealth as far as State taxation is concerned. It seems, from what one reads in the Speech, that probably they are coming down with another increased tax in order to go in for some more of

these very doubtful enterprises of [10 p.m.] theirs which, some day, will have to be paid for. We know what has happened in some of these enterprises. Cattle have been bought with debentures; and, unless the papers do not tell the truth, some of the stock have been brought down to Enoggera and sold. Not sent down to the meatworks, mark you, where prices were low, but sold at Enoggera at the highest possible price, and I assume that the money has gone into the consolidated revenue.

The PREMIER: Is not that the way to keep the market reasonable?

HON. W. H. BARNES: May I say, in answer to the Premier, that his lust for gold and his needs from a Government point of view, suggest that they have to scrape up everything they possibly can to get money in order to replenish the Treasury.

The PREMIER: The hon. member underestimates the public intelligence when he talks like that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier is feeling a bit sore. I notice, in looking through the Auditor-General's report, that he did something else. He said, "We are not going to let any cattle go out of Queensland; we are going to protect the consumer; but if we do let them go out, if you please we will just take 10s. per head." A most evasive way of putting an extra tax on without appearing to get it on, and the Auditor-General's report shows that though an arrangement was made for a refund when the cattle came back, very few came back. The hon. member did not want them to come back; he wanted the amount.

The PREMIER: That amount is held in trust.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has tried in many ways to so arrange things that there will be no doubt that the financial side, as far as he is concerned, should be amply protected. Might I draw attention to the fact that the expenditure to the end of March of this financial year had exceeded the revenue by £494,940, and that we are £75,000 worse off than for the same period last year. We have gone to the bad on revenue account about £152,710, and of the interest on the public debt, which the hon. member, in his statement, estimated at £2,433,463, only £1,615,000 approximately so far has been paid, so that it seems to me that there are indications that at the end of the financial year there is going to be a pretty big deficit in connection with the finances of the State.

The TREASURER: Just what we anticipated last year.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member says he anticipated this last year, but I want to bring him back to this point, that though he may have anticipated it last year he is

likely to receive from the taxation existent, and which was not increased, just as much money as he expected from the present taxation and the new taxation had it been passed.

The TREASURER: You are forming an erroneous opinion.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quite sure that when particulars are shown on 30th June this year I will not be far out. Let me say that finance is the very rock on which every State must be built. The railways cannot be constructed, the State enterprises cannot be continued, unless finance is strong, and the hon. member will agree with me that if we are not able to continue as the result of the breakdown of finance, there comes in its wake dismissal and all the rest of it, and that is no good for the country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Do you know that there is a war on? (Government laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, and I know that there is a very serious war on in connection with the Returned Soldiers' Industrial Institute, and that is very near home. I hope the hon. member will yield partly to lady government in that regard, and do his duty by the soldiers in connection with the Industrial Institute. However, I have side-tracked. I believe that the Government are absolutely oblivious to the need of nursing to the fullest extent the finances of the State. The Minister for Education said that there is a war on. That is one of the reasons why care should be exercised, but the Government have not exercised that care.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: My word, they have!

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is bad enough for the State to-day, but if the hon. member's ideas had been carried out it would have been most disastrous to the community.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We managed it much better than you could have done. There would have been widespread poverty if your Government had been in power.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I did not know the hon. member could pat himself so well on the back; we would not regard him as being a very great expert on finance.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I have had experience of your finance.

At ten minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

HON. W. H. BARNES: For eleven years of the past Government progress was most marked, and there were credit balances every year.

I notice there is a question with regard to a Bill being introduced having to do with the electoral laws. I want to say that the present boundaries of the electorates in the State of Queensland are absolutely unjust.

Mr. FOLEY: They were created by your Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Not to be continued in the present form. The Bill we introduced made it possible to adjust the electorates from time to time. I appeal to many members who call themselves democratic. I always think preference should be given to the country districts. It is only right by reason of their being sparsely populated. But I want to ask if it is a fair

thing that an electorate such as that of the Treasurer should have, I think, 1,600 electors, while another electorate like Bulimba has 11,500?

Mr. FOLEY: How are you going to remedy it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: By doing justice to the community—by introducing a Bill which will readjust these glaring anomalies. It ought to be done; it is right that it should be done.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Would you shift some of them from Bulimba up to Chillagoe?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I can assure you that they are quite satisfied with the district in which they are living. I want to do everything I possibly can in reference to that matter, and I want to appeal to the Minister and ask him, when he is dealing with this matter, if he will not recommend to the Government the question of seeing that justice is done to important electorates like Bulimba, which are certainly handicapped by not having the representation which they ought to have. Is it democratic, is it fair, is it a proper principle that one electorate should have approximately 1,800 electors, and another approximately 11,500?

Mr. FOLEY: Would you cut out some of the Northern electorates?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is not a question of cutting out, but a question of a democratic principle, and if hon. members live for a true democratic principle, surely they will not grudge doing the right and just thing for constituencies which are not properly represented at the present time.

Mr. FOLEY: Cut out the Northern constituencies.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, we might lose the hon. member, and that would be a distinct loss to this House. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: It is only a passing phase.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to close my remarks by saying that I take it that there may be a danger of overlooking what are the larger things in connection with the State, and I venture to say that the policy which has been introduced is to some extent a policy which has overlooked the larger affairs of this State. I believe every member here to-night will agree that the responsibilities resting upon us are tremendous, that they are such as would call upon every man—it does not matter on which side he sits, whether Government or Opposition—to give of his very best for this great State. I think I am right in saying that there is no State equal to this great and glorious State of Queensland, and hence our responsibilities are particularly great in moulding and directing its affairs. And might I say that I am afraid we have got down into the narrow instead of the wide lookout so far as the State is concerned, and that responsibility rests upon us, not to cater for any one industry, but to cater as far as possible, as far as humanly possible, for every person in the community, and especially for the weakest in the community.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You did not say that when you were over here.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I did, and I practised it every time. I say that we should cater for every person in the community, especially for the weakest in the community, and by our just laws, and—might I say—by administration which is above reproach, by

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administration at which the finger of scorn cannot be pointed, and by doing all other things which make for the uplifting of the State, it should be our duty in all our deliberations to aim to do what is great and best for this great State of Queensland.

Question—That the Address in Reply be adopted—put and passed.

SUPPLY.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.”

Question put and passed.

WAYS AND MEANS.

OPENING OF COMMITTEE.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of Ways and Means for raising the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.”

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes past 10 o'clock p.m.