

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 13 AUGUST 1919

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WEDNESDAY, 13 AUGUST, 1919.

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

QUESTIONS.

NUMBER OF RAILWAY EMPLOYEES AND TRAIN MILEAGE.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What is the present number of employees in the Railway Department, temporary or permanent?"

"2. What was the number on 30th June, 1914?"

"3. What number of effective train miles was produced in the course of the operations of the railways during the year 1913-14; what was the number of train miles produced in 1917-18 and 1918-19?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. Permanent, 14,075; temporary, 1,871; construction, 3,859.

"2. Permanent, 10,546; temporary, 2,000; construction, 2,567.

"3. Train miles, 1913-14, 11,346,334; train miles, 1917-18, 10,319,694; train miles, 1918-19, 9,942,744."

LATE RUNNING OF TRAINS AND OVERTIME OF EMPLOYEES.

Mr. HODGE (*Nanango*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"What amount has been paid by the department to railway employees throughout the State, as overtime on account of the late running of trains during the years, respectively, 1914-15, 1915-16, 1916-17, 1917-18, and 1918-19?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"It is not possible to answer the honourable member's question; the Railway Department keep no record of the overtime paid to employees on account of late running of trains."

UNIFORM TAXATION RETURNS.

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

"Is it intended to adopt uniform returns for State and Commonwealth taxation purposes?"

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

"The matter is under consideration."

EVIDENCE OF PREMIER BEFORE COAL COMMISSION IN LONDON—ROMA OIL BORE.

Mr. CORSER asked the Acting Premier—

"1. Has he seen the published evidence of the Premier of Queensland before the Coal Commission in London?"

"2. How does the Cabinet explain Mr. Ryan's statement that additional State enterprises, carried on successfully by the present Queensland Government under Acts of Parliament include mineral oil

production, iron and steel works, canneries, and butteries?"

"3. Will he state where such industries are carried on in the State?"

"4. If non-existent, will the Government take early action to correct the impression given by the Premier in his evidence in London in May last?"

"5. Does the Government consider the Roma oil bore has been successfully established, or is it the bit broken off at the 3,700-foot level embedded in hard rock that is successfully established?"

The ACTING PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore) replied—

"1 to 5. I think that questions involving statements or alleged statements of Mr. Ryan's may very well be postponed until the Premier's return to Brisbane."

GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE TO SOLDIER SETTLERS.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*), on behalf of the hon. member for Kurilpa, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has the Commonwealth Government an agreement with the Queensland Government by which the Queensland Government has undertaken to make land available for soldier settlement?"

"2. Has the Commonwealth Government undertaken to advance the sum of £625, through the Queensland Government, to settlers?"

"3. Is it the intention of the Government to make land available for soldiers who desire to go in for sheep and cattle raising?"

"4. If it is necessary to effect amendments to the present legislation to enable this to be done, will the Government introduce a Bill for this purpose?"

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

"1. The Queensland Government, on its own initiative, has made land available for soldier settlement, and will continue to do so.

"2. No, but the Commonwealth Government is lending to the Queensland Government a certain sum of money which the latter is advancing to returned soldier settlers to the extent of £625 per settler.

"3. The Government is making land available for soldier settlement under perpetual lease tenure, without any restrictions as to how it shall be utilised.

"4. See answers to Nos. 1, 2, and 3."

ALTERATIONS TO STATE BUTCHER'S SHOP, IPSWICH.

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

"1. What was the date alterations, etc., were commenced at the proposed State butcher's shop, Ipswich?"

"2. What amount has been paid by—(a) Works Department; (b) Railway Department?"

"3. What was the estimated cost of the work?"

"4. What is the estimated cost, etc., complete?"

"5. When is it expected to open the shop for business?"

The ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. J. M. Hunter, *Maranoa*) replied—

- "1. 3rd December, 1918.
- "2. (a) Works Department, nil; (b) Railway Department, £1,724 to date.
- "3. £2,500 (including plant, fittings, and general renovations).
- "4. £2,640.
- "5. Shops were opened for business at Ipswich (Central) and North Ipswich this morning. Report received at midday shows that everything is running smoothly and business is very satisfactory."

NORMANBY RAILWAY BRIDGE CONSTRUCTIONAL WORK.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Orley*) asked the SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS—

"With reference to the Normanby Bridge railway constructional work recently completed, will he state—

- "1. Was the concrete for the walls of the bridge mixed by hand and hauled up to the top by a windlass worked by two men, with only a small bucket attached?
- "2. What was the cost of such concrete per yard in this constructional work?
- "3. Is it a fact that a steam concrete mixing plant was lying idle on the bank?
- "4. What is the estimated cost per yard of concrete if the steam mixing plant had been used?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

- "1. Concrete for walls was mixed by hand, there being no room for mixer in bottom of cutting. Men and windlass worked only short time at early stages of work—a horse being used part of time and later a steam winch for the higher lifts—buckets of $\frac{1}{4}$ cubic yard capacity being used.
- "2. Costs have not been kept separate, but the mixing plant was brought into operation as soon as it was economical to do so.
- "3. A steam concrete mixer was on top of cutting.
- "4. See answer to No. 2."

GLENELG AND GREY STREETS RAILWAY CONSTRUCTIONAL WORK.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Railways—

"In connection with the Glenelg and Grey streets railway constructional work, where certain extensive repairs have recently been found necessary in regard to the piers and retaining wall, will he state—

1. What has occasioned these repairs so soon after the original work has been completed?
2. What has been the total cost of such repairs?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. The weight of railway bank when completed set up a movement in the wall. Examination showed the existence of an old creek course under it. The existence

of this creek was not previously known nor indicated by the foundations of original bridge.

"2. The extra cost arising therefrom, £195."

GOVERNMENT LAND ADVERTISEMENT IN "BRITISH AUSTRALASIAN."

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Has his attention been called to the following advertisement which has been appearing regularly in the 'British Australasian' newspaper, published in London:—

QUEENSLAND.

The Land of Plenty!

Renowned for its great wealth of resources, prolific harvests, salubrious climate, richness of soil, even rainfall.

Five and a-half times larger than Great Britain and Ireland. Three times the size of France.

Population, 641,000.

Splendid opportunities for farmers. Millions of acres of fertile land awaiting settlement.

Freehold agricultural farms from 2s. 6d. per acre.

For pamphlets and further particulars apply to—

The Agent-General for Queensland,
409, Strand, London, W.C.?

"2. Is his department, in fact, making freehold agricultural farms available for selection at from 2s. 6d. per acre?

"3. If so, where?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

- "1. No.
- "2. No.
- "3. See answers to Nos. 1 and 2."

RAILWAY SIDINGS AND DEVIATIONS OF WARRA STATE COALMINE.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What erections have been made, and what sidings or deviations constructed at Warra, for the purposes of the State coalmine there?

"2. What has been the cost of such erections, sidings, and deviations to the Railway Department to date?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1 and 2. Beyond the building of a dam for which the Mines Department paid the cost—viz., £714 5s. 8d., the Railway Department made no erections, sidings, or deviations for the State coalmine at Warra."

ARBITRATION ON NORTHERN RAILWAY EMPLOYEES' AWARD.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*) asked the Acting Chief Secretary—

"What is the position of the negotiations in connection with the arbitration upon the 1917 Northern Railway Employees' Award which was some time ago referred to Mr. Justice Stringer, of New Zealand, for settlement?"

The ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) replied—
“They are still proceeding.”

RESIGNATIONS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS.

Mr. SIZER asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Will he state the reasons for the resignation from the service of the following:—Dr. Burton Bradley, Government Microbiologist; Dr. J. J. Harris, Laboratory Director; Dr. Thomson, Health Officer; Mr. Beardmore, first assistant, Laboratory; Mr. Beaver, senior food inspector; Mr. Stewart, senior food inspector?”

“2. What was the date of—(a) The earliest of these resignations; (b) the latest of them?”

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

“1. Doctors Bradley and Harris and Messrs. Beaver and Stewart gave no reasons, and I would suggest that the honourable member make personal application to the gentlemen referred to for the information he requires. I may add that Mr. Beaver desires to rejoin the department. Dr. Thomson accepted an appointment with the Federal Government, and Mr. Beardmore an appointment with the Tasmanian Government.

“2. (a) 27th November, 1917; (b) 18th November, 1918.”

EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Acting Chief Secretary—

“1. What was the total expense incurred by or in connection with the Public Works Commission from 30th June, 1918, to 1st July, 1919, including the remuneration or personal expenses of the members of the Commission?”

“2. What amount has been paid to each member of the Commission, and how many days did each member draw expenses for?”

The ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY replied—

“1. £2,660 16s. 3d.

“2. Mr. Stopford, £258 6s., 123 days; Mr. Payne, £260 8s., 124 days; Mr. Gilday, £262 10s., 125 days; Mr. H. J. Ryan, £266 14s., 127 days; Mr. Collins, £226 16s., 108 days.”

STATE CEMETERY AT BABINDA.

Mr. GUNN asked the Home Secretary—

“1. Has any amount been paid, or become payable, in respect of the resumption of 5 acres of land at Babinda for the purposes of establishing a State cemetery in close and convenient proximity to the Babinda State hotel?”

“2. If so, what is the amount involved, and is it the intention of the Government that the money shall be chargeable against the revenues of the hotel, which is likely to do so much towards promoting the cemetery's success?”

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

“1 and 2. An amount of £120 2s. 11d. has been paid as compensation for an area resumed for a cemetery for the township of Babinda.”

FORM OF QUESTIONS.

The SPEAKER: I take this opportunity of pointing out to the hon. member for Burnett and the hon. member for Carnarvon that complaints have been made frequently by the leader of the Opposition and other hon. members with regard to the Speaker altering questions. I want to point out to these two hon. members that their questions may be humorous, but they are not questions that should be put on the business-paper of the House. I have no objection to hon. members exercising their humour through “Hansard,” but I have a decided objection to their putting questions like these on the business-paper. One question by the hon. member for Burnett reads—

“Does the Government consider the Roma oil bore has been successfully established, or is it the bit broken off at the 3,700-ft. level, embedded in hard rock, that is successfully established?”

Mr. CORSER: That is not my question; that is only one-fifth of my question.

The SPEAKER: I would also point out that a question put by the hon. member for Carnarvon does not seek information at all. I allowed these questions to appear on the business-paper to-day, but I take this opportunity of pointing out to hon. members that in future this method for the display of alleged humour will not be tolerated.

PAPERS.

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

Annual report of the Director, State Children Department, for the year 1918.

Order in Council under the Workers' Compensation Act of 1916, dated 1st August, 1919.

CROWN FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

On the motion of Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*), it was formally resolved—

“That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The amount of fees paid and payable respectively to each barrister, solicitor, or conveyancer employed by the Crown during the year ended 30th June, 1919, exclusive of amounts recoverable from opposing parties.

2. Fees paid and payable respectively to each barrister, solicitor, and conveyancer employed by the Crown during the year ended 30th June, 1919, but recoverable from opponents of the Crown.”

ADVERTISING IN NEWSPAPERS.

ORDER FOR RETURN.

On the motion of Mr. PETRIE, it was formally resolved—

“That there be laid on the table of the House a return showing—

1. The names of newspapers outside Queensland with which the Chief Secretary's Department has, or has had, contracts during the past two years, with the cost of each separate contract.

Mr. Petrie.]

2. The purpose for which this newspaper space was purchased in each case.

3. The names of the newspapers—*(a)* Within Queensland; *(b)* outside Queensland, in which the Queensland Tourist Bureau has advertised during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1919, with the amounts paid and payable to each paper in respect of such advertising.

4. The names of the newspapers—*(a)* Within Queensland; *(b)* outside Queensland, in which the Railway Department has advertised during the twelve months ended 30th June, 1919, with the amounts paid or payable to each paper in respect of such advertising."

DAIRY PRODUCE BILL.

PROPOSED INITIATION IN COMMITTEE—INTERPRETATION OF STANDING ORDER No. 280A.

On the Order of the Day being read for the consideration in Committee of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to regulate dairy produce, and for other incidental purposes,

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. Lennon, *Herbert*) said: I beg to move—

"That the Speaker do now leave the chair."

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): As the business coming before the House is to come under Standing Order No. 280A, I think the hon. gentleman at least should inform the House whether the Bill which is being introduced is the same Bill as that which was transmitted to the Legislative Council last session, and in connection with the provisions of the Standing Order it might be convenient for you, Mr. Speaker, to lay down the rule as to where discussion is possible and as to where discussion is prohibited. The Standing Order is quite clear in itself. It provides that the Bill may be introduced on a motion, after notice, and that it cannot be discussed at the recognised stages of a Bill, but I submit that it is reasonable to ask for information such as we do on the initiatory stages of a Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member may remember that, when giving notice yesterday, I distinctly stated that the Bill was the same as the Bill introduced last year.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question before the House is, that I do now leave the chair. The hon. member for Toowong, I understand, has raised a point of order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is so—as to the provisions of the Standing Order.

The SPEAKER: I would like to hear the hon. member on the point.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Standing Order dealing with the matter reads—

"When a Bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly, and transmitted to the Legislative Council, and not returned to the Legislative Assembly owing to prorogation of Parliament—"

I understand that up to that point there is probably no dispute, as the Bill was before this Chamber and was not returned to this House. It was not finally dealt

with before prorogation. I do not dispute that position, nor that the same Bill is now being introduced in the Assembly. I take it, on your assurance, Mr. Speaker, that it is the same Bill.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have given that assurance twice.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Standing Order then goes on—

"the same Bill may be introduced into the Legislative Assembly, on motion after notice in a subsequent session of the same Parliament and passed through all its stages, without amendment or debate."

I submit that the words "passed through all its stages" refer to all the stages subsequent to the passing of the "motion after notice."

The SPEAKER: Does the hon. member say that the stage we are entering upon is not a stage of the Bill within the meaning of Standing Order No. 280A?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I say that the stage we are entering upon now is not a stage within the meaning of Standing Order No. 280A. The stages referred to in Standing Order No. 280A are all stages subsequent to the motion after notice. Once it is decided that it is desirable to introduce a Bill, then I take it that all the stages that follow must be dealt with without amendment or without debate. That seems to me to be the reading of the Standing Order.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Koppel*): I submit that the point raised by the leader of the Opposition is unsound, as the motion simply seeks authority to introduce the Bill. The question is governed by Standing Order No. 280A, paragraph (2), and that paragraph sets out that the Bill may be passed without amendment or debate and transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence in the usual manner; but it will be observed that the optional word "may" is used and not the imperative word "shall"; and it is a matter for the Minister or the House to say whether, at any particular stage, the Bill shall be passed without amendment or debate. In the absence of a specific resolution by the House that the Bill shall be passed without amendment or debate, amendment or debate is permissible. I hold, therefore, that the point raised by the leader of the Opposition is unsound. The Standing Order only operates when the House passes a specific resolution. Then, consider the position from the viewpoint of the point of order raised by the leader of the Opposition. Supposing that under this Standing Order a Bill had to be transmitted to the Legislative Council without amendment or debate, it would absolutely preclude the Government or the Minister from giving the necessary explanation or from making any minor amendment in the Bill. I submit finally that, as the permissive word "may" is used and not the imperative word "shall," it is quite possible at this stage or at any other stage to discuss or amend the Bill in the absence of a specific resolution to the contrary.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member will recognise that the word "may" applies to the Bill. No Standing Order can compel the Minister to reintroduce a Bill, or say that the Minister "shall" introduce the same Bill again.

[*Mr. Petrie.*

[4 p.m.]

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will just read the Standing Order—

“When a Bill has been passed by the Legislative Assembly, and transmitted to the Legislative Council, and not returned to the Legislative Assembly owing to prorogation of Parliament, the same Bill may be introduced into the Legislative Assembly, on motion after notice, in a subsequent session of the same Parliament, and passed through all its stages, without amendment or debate.”

It “may” be so introduced and passed—not “shall.” It is quite optional. It is within the discretion of the House to determine whether it will follow that course, or otherwise. As the Secretary for Agriculture has not submitted a specific motion asking for it to be dealt with under Standing Order 280A, that—

The SPEAKER: If the Minister desires to take advantage of this Standing Order, the Bill must go through without debate.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is the point—“if the Minister desires.” As he has not indicated his desire, I say the point of order of the leader of the Opposition must fail. That is my submission—that until the Secretary for Agriculture, or some other member of the Government, moves for the operation of the Standing Order, it is quite permissible to discuss the Bill at any stage. The Standing Order can only operate by specific resolution—not until the Minister moves. I submit, therefore, that the point raised by the leader of the Opposition is unsound.

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not know that there is very much in the point touched upon by the hon. member for Keppel. Obviously it would be absurd, under the Standing Order, to compel the Minister again to introduce the Bill. I think the principal points in the Standing Order governing the present situation are the definitions of the words “the passing of the Bill through all its stages.” What do those words mean? “The Bill after being” introduced into the Legislative Assembly, on motion after notice, in a subsequent session of the same Parliament, and passed through all its stages? We are in the habit of referring to the “preliminary stages” of a Bill, and the “introductory stages” of a Bill, and obviously we give a wider meaning to these words than merely to the first reading, the second reading, the Committee stage, and the third reading stage of the Bill. The Bill “through all its stages” refers to something wider than the mere first or second reading. We speak, as I have already mentioned, of the “introductory stages” of the Bill. This is obviously one of the introductory stages of the Bill: and, if it is one of the stages of the Bill, it must go through without debate; and at that stage there is no opportunity either to speak upon the principles or details of the Bill. The Standing Order, I think, is clear, and that it is not permissible to discuss the Bill at any stage, preliminary or otherwise, after a decision has been arrived at to take advantage of this Standing Order.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I am surprised at the contention of the Acting Premier. I think the meaning of the Standing Order is that the business at present before the House is that you, Mr. Speaker, do now leave the chair, as the result of a motion

which has been moved, which is the consideration in Committee of the desirableness of introducing the Bill. Standing Order 280A starts—

“When a Bill has been passed—”

But we are not discussing a Bill now. We are discussing the words “motion after notice,” and whether it is desirable to introduce the Bill.

The SPEAKER: No; the hon. member is discussing the point of order. The leader of the Opposition did not raise any particular objection, but asked more for a decision as to the procedure to be followed under Standing Order 280A.

Mr. VOWLES: That is so, but I contend that this House is entitled, under the Standing Order, to debate at this stage the motion as to the desirableness to introduce. We are not dealing with the Bill itself.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not the motion. The motion is—

“That the Speaker do now leave the chair.”

Mr. VOWLES: As a result of the motion which has been moved that it is desirable to go into Committee. You, Sir, are to leave the chair, after notice, to go into Committee. I submit that the interpretation of the Standing Order is that we have a right to discuss the desirableness of introducing the Bill, preliminary to your leaving the chair, and after you do leave the chair, the question arises whether we can debate the Bill subsequently in Committee.

The SPEAKER: In regard to the Standing Order, I think that the meaning of the Standing Order is that discussion should be allowed on the motion for leave to introduce, to enable the Minister to supply the House with information. It is obvious that at some stage—we may call them stages of the Bill—it is obvious that at some stage of the proceedings information must be given so that hon. members will know that the Bill is identical with the Bill that was submitted and passed during the previous session. Consequently I would rule that discussion should be allowed on the motion for leave to introduce the Bill. I allowed that discussion yesterday. I think also, if I might make a suggestion, that the Minister moving this motion, or giving notice of it, might include in that motion a statement that it is intended to put the Bill through under the provisions of Standing Order No. 280A.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: That would show the House that a certain course of action had been decided upon. The second question raised is, “Is this one of the stages of the Bill?” My opinion is that, having had that opportunity of addressing themselves to the proposal to put this Bill through in the same form as it passed the House on the previous occasion, the introductory stages would come under Standing Order No. 280A, and that there would be no discussion or debate. It is obvious also that, where there can be no result from discussion or debate, it would be useless for the House to continue discussion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Only because of the majority.

The SPEAKER: Yes, only because a majority will desire it. The opportunity of objecting can be taken at various stages

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by dividing the House when the question is put. I think that the Standing Orders Committee intended that they should be regarded as stages, because, as I said before, if we allow discussion no result can accrue, and consequently we would be defeating the purpose of the Standing Order.

The third point is one upon which the Standing Order is slightly ambiguous. It does not distinctly say that the Bill should pass through all its stages in one day, although it intended to say it. The latter part of the Standing Order to some extent touches that question, where it says that "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in these Standing Orders contained." Still I think the Standing Order should have said that the Bill should be passed through all its stages in one day without amendment or debate, then it would be capable of no other construction. Again the question arises, and the intention is clear, that it would be no good postponing it for, say, three or four days, as is usual on other Bills when no result can come of it. No debate can take place, and there can be no alteration of the result. Hon. members have the opportunity at each of these stages of making their protest by dividing the House. I have no hesitation in saying that, so far as these stages are concerned, the introductory stages are stages within the meaning of the Standing Order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: After the first reading.

The SPEAKER: No, after the motion for leave to introduce the Bill. That is my construction of the Standing Order, and the ruling that I give.

Mr. MACARTNEY: This is the motion for leave to introduce.

The SPEAKER: No. I do not want to go over my arguments again. I think that is the intention of the Standing Order. If any good could result from debate, then I might feel inclined to say that the stages were from the first reading, but all the authorities that can be obtained on the matter go to show that the words "stages of a Bill" mean all its stages. There is no difference between the introductory stage of a Bill, the second reading stage, and the Committee stage. They are all stages of the Bill. To put an exact interpretation upon it, the House would have to register a decision as to what is included in the word "stages."

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Stages are stopping places.

The SPEAKER: Each stage is a resting place in the consideration of a Bill as it passes through this House. I have also satisfied myself that the Bill is exactly the same as that which previously passed this House. I have compared the two Bills and they are identical. The other parts of the Standing Order have also been fulfilled. The Legislative Council passed the second reading of the Bill and referred it to a Select Committee. It still is in the hands of that committee, and this House must assume that the Council intended to return it to this House had they not been prevented by the prorogation of Parliament. Consequently, I think the decision I have laid down can stand as the procedure in dealing with Bills under this Standing Order.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

[*Hon. W. McCormack.*]

INITIATION IN COMMITTEE.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to regulate dairy produce and for other incidental purposes."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not know that anything can be added to what has already been said on the question of the interpretation of the Standing Order. The Speaker has said that the Bill is identical with the Bill of last year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not take my assurance on that point?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman does not seem to have taken any responsibility on himself in the matter at all.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I have told you twice that the Bill is identical.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The only point I now wish to dispute so far as the procedure is concerned is that I think the Standing Order is not effective in so far that it does not provide for all the stages being taken in one day. There is probably a good reason for that. We do not know what was in the minds of the Standing Orders Committee when they passed this Standing Order. It would be a very dangerous procedure not to give it its proper construction. Surely, if they intended a certain thing, they would have made their intention plain. I do not wish to press the point just now; I will raise it later on.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the resolution was agreed to.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE, the Bill was read a first time, and ordered to be printed.

SECOND READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

"That the Bill be now read a second time."

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have never heard of a Bill being read a second time before it was printed. The printing must have taken place very quickly. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman moved that it be printed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes; and before it could possibly be printed he moved "that it be read a second time."

Mr. KIRWAN: That is an example of State enterprise. No "go slow" methods there.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Leaving that out of consideration, we seem to be departing from the practical terms of the Standing Order. Even though we feel positive that the Standing Order might be improved if certain things were included in it, there may have been something in the minds of the Standing Orders Committee to lead them to believe that some good purpose could be attained by the different stages being taken in accordance with the other provisions of the Standing Orders. Standing Order 280A certainly contains nothing to alter the provisions of the Standing Orders, providing

that the second reading shall take place on a future day, or that the Committee stages shall take place on the same or a future day, or that the third reading shall take place on a future day. I submit that you, Sir, will not give countenance to a lax interpretation of the Standing Orders in that direction.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman knows that this Bill has already passed through this House.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes. But there is the Standing Order, which speaks for itself. The extent to which the other Standing Orders have been relaxed has been clearly and fairly stated. There is no provision in Standing Order 280A providing for the relaxation of other Standing Orders to enable all the different stages to be dealt with in one day. If you were to give that interpretation to it, you would be applying to it an interpretation I have never heard of, which would be unsafe, and would practically mean that we might as well have no Standing Orders at all.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member's point of order is whether the Standing Order gives authority to pass the Bill through all its stages in one day.

The ACTING PREMIER: The last sentence in paragraph (2) of Standing Order 280A, I think, gives some guidance as to the meaning of the paragraph. It reads—

“The same Bill may be introduced into the Legislative Assembly, on motion after notice, in a subsequent session of the same Parliament, and passed through all its stages, without amendment or debate, and sent it to Legislative Council for their concurrence.”

It is obviously intended to convey that the stages shall proceed successively without delay, and that the Bill shall be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It means that the first reading, the second reading, the Committee stage, and the third reading must be taken without amendment or debate, notwithstanding anything to the contrary in the Standing Orders stated; but it does not say that they can be taken on the one day, and the last words of clause 2 have no relation whatever to the Standing Orders dealing with the times of taking such stages.

The ACTING PREMIER: But why should the reference be put in regarding its being sent to the Legislative Council for their concurrence? It means that the Bill should be passed through all its stages without amendment or debate, and apparently forthwith sent to the Legislative Council.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is the extent of the license.

The ACTING PREMIER: I think your own interpretation, Mr. Speaker, and your own reasoning on the point are unanswerable. What object could be served by delaying the successive stages?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Standing Orders Committee may have had something in their minds.

The ACTING PREMIER: If they had, they certainly would have inserted it in the Standing Order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is a very lax way of looking at it.

The ACTING PREMIER: The Standing Orders Committee have introduced the Standing Order for the purpose of expedition, and the greatest expedition can be accomplished by passing the Bill through all its stages in one day.

The SPEAKER: I cannot add anything to what I have already said—namely, that the Standing Orders Committee probably meant that in a case such as that before the House the Bill should be passed through all its stages in one day. Reviewing the whole of the circumstances connected with the passage of a Standing Order like this, it will be evident that nothing was further from the general intention of the Standing Orders Committee than that the successive stages of the Bill should be separated and extended over a number of days. To construct the Standing Order in any other way would be contrary to the common-sense reading of the Standing Order. No doubt, there is something in what the leader of the Opposition says, that, strictly speaking, there is no mention in the Standing Order of the different stages of a Bill such as this being taken on separate days.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We ought to be very strict in these matters.

The SPEAKER: The hon. gentleman must recognise that the construction which I have indicated is certainly the construction intended to be put upon this particular Standing Order by the Standing Orders Committee.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They ought to have said what they meant.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must admit, I think, that, viewed from a common-sense point of view, my interpretation is correct, and that this House should conduct its business in a reasonable manner. We have to use a certain amount of common sense in interpreting the Standing Orders; and there is no doubt that the construction I have put upon the Standing Order was the construction intended by the Standing Orders Committee when they framed the Order. If the hon. member can point out to me where anything is to be gained by postponing the various stages of the Bill, or where anything contained in the Standing Order is open to that construction, I will agree with him; but that is not the case. The whole tenor of the Standing Order must be considered, and the Order itself must be construed reasonably.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Standing Order is not reasonable.

The SPEAKER: That may be from the hon. gentleman's point of view, but I think my reasoning with regard to the matter is perfectly sound.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 36 and schedules 1 and 2 of the Bill were put and passed without amendment or debate.

The House resumed, and the CHAIRMAN reported the Bill without amendment.

THIRD READING.

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

Hon. W. Lennox.]

ADDRESS IN REPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. KIRWAN (*Brisbane*): I desire to make a few observations before this motion is disposed of. In the first place I propose to refer to a couple of the Bills that are mentioned in the programme for the session.

I think they are measures which [4.30 p.m.] should receive the serious consideration of this House, and I hope and trust sincerely that they will find a place on the statute-book of Queensland. I think that anyone who has travelled around the city of Brisbane and suburbs will recognise the necessity for amending the Undue Subdivision of Lands Prevention Act. If I might be pardoned for making a suggestion to the Minister who may have charge of this Bill, I would point out that there is another aspect of the question which has struck members who have travelled around the metropolis, and that is the undesirability of some of the sites that are sold for building purposes. I do not think that by any stretch of imagination they can be considered either healthy or desirable, and I would like to see that particular phase dealt with, because I recognise that health reasons necessitate this Bill to prevent overcrowding, and, whilst we might have an acre on which to place a cottage, still, if that acre is in an unhealthy suburb—swampy land, for instance—it should be prevented also.

The necessity for a Fair Rents Bill, for the Health Act Amendment Bill, the Tramway Fares Bill, and the Tramway Purchase Bill, requires no emphasis from me. I desire, however, to express my personal gratification at seeing a Fire Brigades Bill outlined in this programme. I believe that the present Fire Brigade Board of the city of Brisbane, who have done splendid work, largely through the co-operation of a very capable and able superintendent and a very excellent staff of men, have accomplished it, not so much because of the aid of the Act under which they work, but, if I might say so, in spite of that measure. I am sure that those who are interested in fire brigade work in the city, including the board and its superintendent, will recognise that in the introduction of this Bill the Government are making an honest attempt to place the board in Brisbane in a position to afford the necessary protection from an outbreak of fire which an expanding city such as Brisbane distinctly requires.

The Police Superannuation Bill is one which I am sure will give entire satisfaction to the members of the force. Its introduction will give us a Bill long promised and absolutely necessary to remove the injustice from which the members of the force have suffered for a number of years, and will place them in a position something like that to which their standing entitles them.

The Unemployment Bill will make an attempt to deal with one of the most difficult problems of the age, and I venture to express the hope, and likewise the opinion, that members will discuss it irrespective of party.

Mr. ROBERTS: This side will.

Mr. KIRWAN: I shall give the hon. member a bit of evidence later on as to the non-party spirit of members opposite. They could not let a disaster like the loss of the "Llewellyn" pass by without attempting to make political capital out of it.

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Mr. ROBERTS: You knew the "Llewellyn" was not safe.

Mr. KIRWAN: If I knew it was not safe I would not draw a rack over the sorrowing feelings of the relatives whose near and dear ones went down in that vessel. To read the speeches of some members of the Opposition would not reconcile them to their loss or bring consolation in their grief.

Mr. GLEDSON: It shows their criminal neglect in not making it known before.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member for Albert spoke of the necessity of unity in the community, and preached quite a sermon on that text. I would suggest that he bring the matter under the notice of his own leader. The leader of the Opposition has been guilty of the very thing the hon. member saw fit to chide members on this side of the House for. As a matter of fact, the leader of the Opposition has been accused of preaching class hatred in the community. And by whom? Not by any Minister of the Crown, not by any member of this party, not by any of the extremist section, but by no less an organ of public opinion than the "Brisbane Courier."

Mr. SMITH: It does not represent public opinion.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member might be justified in saying that, but I am dealing with the matter from the standpoint of the Opposition. They believe it does represent public opinion, and, if I might be excused for giving expression to a very pious wish that is deep down in my heart, I would say, "Long may the 'Brisbane Courier' continue," because I am satisfied that, so long as it backs the Opposition, so long will they sit on the back Opposition seats. Dealing with "Mr. Macartney's Queer Schemes," on the 18th December last the "Courier," said—

"Mr. Macartney suggests that between the political objectives of the Trades Hall party and those of the National (Liberal) party there is no fundamental antagonism? Surely everyone knows that National Liberalism stands for development and social betterment on the existing foundations of organised society, and the Trades Hall party for war against the whole organisation of society as we know it to-day—foundation as well as superstructure. For the purposes of the moment Mr. Macartney pretends that there is little difference. Then he says you cannot ask employees to join an organisation which is representative of employers. If he means that employers as such are mainly represented in the National Political Council, he knows that that is not so. If he means merely that some employers as such have representation there, that is correct, but does he suggest that employers ought to be denied political representation? Does he assert that the political interests of employers and employees are irreconcilable, or that there is any good reason why they should not work together in political harmony? If that is now Mr. Macartney's political doctrine, his proper place is in the Trades Hall."

Mr. COLLINS: God forbid!

Mr. KIRWAN:

"He is preaching the damnable creed of class consciousness, of essential conflict

between the interests of Labour and Capital, the cause of most of the political hatred and bitterness in Australia to-day."

Mr. SIZER: Yet you say that the "Courier" supports us.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member knows perfectly well that the "Courier" supports them at election time, when it is necessary to do so, and there is no question that the general opinion is that, so long as that organ of public opinion supports hon. members opposite, so long will they remain where they are.

Mr. GUNN: Why growl about it?

Mr. KIRWAN: I am not growling about it. I am simply pointing out the inconsistency, not only of the hon. member for Albert, but also of nearly every member of the Opposition. For instance, the hon. member for Burnett said last night that there was no profiteering, and in the very next breath he declared with much emphasis that the cost of living had gone up 65 per cent.

Mr. CORSER: 60.4 per cent.

Mr. KIRWAN: I was much nearer the mark than the hon. member gets. The hon. member for Albert spoke also of our wonderful civilisation, and the fact that a certain small section of the community were endeavouring by propaganda to alter it. Why, if it were not for the propaganda of the Labour movement in Australia, and the power of industrial unionism, we would have conditions here somewhat similar to those existing in older countries. Every one knows of the awful and pitiful conditions revealed when the war started in England. No one can deny that the man-power of England was considerably and seriously reduced by the rotten conditions under which the people lived. The late Right Honourable Joseph Chamberlain, who was never a Labour man, declared in one of his memorable speeches discussing tariff reform, that there were 12,000,000 people in Great Britain on the verge of starvation—one-third of the entire population. And yet the hon. member for Albert seems to think that it is a splendid system, and any attempt to wreck it, or injure it, or amend it, is to be met with considerable opposition. I say that the happier condition of affairs in Australia to-day is largely due to the propaganda of the Labour party and the force of industrial unionism; and, if you want any illustration of that, you have it in the records of this House, where every move in the direction of improving those conditions has been fought by hon. members opposite. The hon. member also complained that, as a result of certain propaganda literature that had been distributed throughout the country, some doggerel had been written. I do not know that hon. members opposite should complain about that, as the washing of the dirty linen between the various sections of their own party inspired the poet in the "Window Column" of the "Daily Mail" to pour forth certain doggerel. He wrote this—

"Apparently our way of howling does not fit the public ear,
Though we seize the opportunity our action isn't clear;
Though we tell our tribulations to each interested bloke,
Our welcome seems exhausted, and our role on earth bespoken."

That is some of the stuff that the soul of the poet in the "Window Column" of the "Daily Mail" was inspired with when he read of the differences of opinion expressed by members of the party opposite. The hon. member also attacked the seamen. He went so far as to declare that the present strike of seamen in Australia is due, more or less, to agitators.

Mr. COLLINS: He ought to be sent to the fore-castle for six months.

Mr. KIRWAN: If the Acting Prime Minister of the Commonwealth were very anxious to settle this shipping dispute, it could be settled very quickly, and it could be settled in this way: Under the War Precautions Act he has power to get the editors of the "Brisbane Courier," the "Daily Mail," the "Telegraph," and also of the leading nationalist papers in Sydney and Melbourne, and he might add to them the leader of the Opposition, the deputy leader of the Queensland Farmers' Union, the executives of the Brisbane National Political Council and the National Democratic Union, and a couple of the managers of the shipping companies, and put them in the stokehole of an ocean-going steamer and ask them to live under the conditions under which the seamen have had to live for some considerable time past, pay them the same wages, and if, at the end of a month, these men were prepared to say that the conditions and wages were acceptable, then he could use his power as Prime Minister of the Commonwealth, and under threat of severe punishment compel the seamen to go back to work. What is it that the seamen ask for? We have heard hon. members opposite say, "Go to the Arbitration Court." Why, the seamen went to the Arbitration Court some considerable time ago; but, as a matter of fact, in connection with this particular dispute, they need not go to the Arbitration Court, because the Arbitration Court is powerless to do anything for them. In the first instance, they ask for an increase in wages. They ask for £9 a month for ordinary seamen over eighteen years of age, £14 a month for A.B.'s, and a slightly higher wage for other grades. As a matter of fact, the seamen on the British ships to-day are getting £16 a month, and yet these men are content to accept £2 a month less. The reason why the Arbitration Court can do nothing for them is that, owing to an appeal to the High Court by the Employers' Federation, the High Court decided that once an award was made it could not be varied during the term of the award. Therefore, as the award was made last year, the seamen cannot go to the Arbitration Court again and get justice. The next point is in regard to food. I would like to know how hon. gentlemen who criticise the seamen and who talk about the starving women and children in the North would like to have their food, eat their meals, and live under the conditions under which these seamen do. When we come to consider the splendid service that the seamen have rendered in connection with the war—when we come to consider that they went to sea and repeatedly took the risk of being torpedoed, and those down in the stokehole of being sent to Eternity without a second's notice—their demands are very reasonable. Yet, when the war is over—when the shipping combines have made their millions—here in Australia they cleared about

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£15,000,000—and these men ask for decent conditions, reasonable wages, and proper food. They are called a lot of Bolshevik revolutionaries. I hope that the seamen will not man a ship until they get what they ask. The hon. member for Albert, as well as other hon. members opposite who have already spoken—and it is part of the propaganda of their daily Press—said that Queensland is the only place in the world where there is industrial unrest; that every other country in the world is lovely and glorious because there is no Labour Government in power, and that the reason why we have industrial unrest here is that we have in power a Government which they allege tolerates the extremists and those with revolutionary ideas. We are also told by them, as we were at the time of the Merivale street riot, that it is largely due to the fact that we had foreigners here. I will prove that they were brought here by gentlemen opposite; they were brought here particularly after the cessation of the black labour traffic in connection with the sugar industry had been done away with. At that time the party opposite made special attempts to induce European labour to come out here so that it could not be organised by the Australian Workers' Union, and now that these people turn round and rend them, they want to put the blame on the Labour party. We are told that this industrial unrest is one element of disloyalty. I want to know what hon. members opposite have to say about the industrial unrest in Belfast. If my reading teaches me anything, Belfast is the Mecca of loyalty; the people there are not governed by the Trades Hall; they have nothing to do with the pro-German agitators, and one would naturally expect, in such a loyal place, you would have things as one might expect them to be in a well-ordered community. But what do we find? The Melbourne "Age" of the 31st January had this to say—

"Belfast remains the most serious storm centre. Correspondents describe the situation as little short of a reign of terror. The mob wrecked a large drapery establishment because it was using electric light. The police, with batons, charged and dispersed the crowd."

Then the "Daily Mail" cables of 3rd February, 1919, read—

"UGLY SITUATION.

"THREATENS IN BELFAST.

"*Robberies fashionable.*

"London, Saturday—The Belfast strike situation is uglier. A strikers' bulletin announces that because of the refusal of the employers to consult the Lord Mayor, a more drastic policy is being considered.

"Pickets have been notified that two shipbuilding yards will not be allowed to use their works without a permit from the strike committee.

"Highway robberies have become fashionable in the suburbs."

And, lo and behold! the first part of the British Empire to have a Soviet Government established was loyal Belfast. Then

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the "Courier" of the 5th February of this year had the following—

"STRIKES IN BRITAIN.

"NO SIGNS OF IMPROVEMENT.

"*Belfast held up.*

A 'Labour Parliament' in Control.

London, Monday.

"The strikers so-called 'Labour Parliament,' sitting in the Artisans' Hall, Belfast, is entirely controlling the city by negative measures. They have stopped the trams, motors, taxis, and cut off the gas and electricity. There was a marked diminution of disorder at the week-end. The 'Parliament' is urging peaceful methods as far as possible, and its activities are 'departmentalised' to a large extent. Six committees are constantly sitting, and there is even an organised Press committee, to which applicants for information are referred. The 'Parliament' exercises a strict watch over the speakers, and disavows unauthorised ones. It permits the use of a certain amount of gas nightly for domestic purposes, but insufficient to supply cooking stoves in the low-lying working-class districts and only inadequately serving the higher levels."

And we have read quite recently of the outbreak in a town called Luton, in Bedfordshire, England. The returned soldiers waited on His Worship the Mayor of that city and asked permission to hold a public meeting in a public park, but they were turned down, and immediately they put a firestick into the town hall and destroyed a quarter of a million pounds worth of property. I am now quoting from the cables of the "Daily Mail" of this city. The fire brigade turned out, and half of them were sent to the hospital by the strikers. The police were sent out to protect them, and a goodly number of the police were sent about their business to undergo alterations and repairs in the local hospital. In Liverpool quite recently the people took control of the city. They raided all the shops there, and we read in the papers of the children sitting down on the footpaths trying on boots, and the boots that did not fit them were thrown away, and we read also of people going away with handcarts full of loot. That is what happened in a country where there is no Labour Government. There the people are excessively loyal, and yet hon. members opposite want to say that the squabbling in Townsville and the raiding of a couple of shops were caused because this Government is in power, and they try to create an impression abroad that, if a Nationalist Government were in power those things would not have happened.

It would be time enough to make a noise if the position was the same as in the older countries of the world. Hon. members opposite ask this Government why it does not govern. What is the position in England to-day? Lloyd George is absolutely powerless. Returned with the greatest majority of any Prime Minister in the history of that country, he is to-day absolutely powerless to solve the problems confronting him. Yet hon. members opposite endeavour to convey the impression, and to create a public opinion based on false

allegation, that the disturbances and industrial disorder in Townsville can be entirely ascribed to this party. They know that is untrue, and that the Commonwealth Government to-day is powerless and unable to man a single ship. The hon. member for Bulimba the other night talked of manning ships with naval men. Why does Mr. Watt not man them? He has all the powers under the War Precautions Act behind him, but he is powerless to shift one ship.

We are told that the workers should go to the Arbitration Court instead of resorting to strikes. It has been pointed out by speakers from this side that the difficulty in the Arbitration Court to-day is this: Even when the workers, under the most favourable circumstances, are able to approach the Arbitration Court without delay, an award is no sooner made than the cost of living goes up to rob the worker of the increase. We heard a great deal during the war as to the sacrifices being made by different sections of the community, but I can say without fear of contradiction that those who made the sacrifices in Australia belong to the working class, and it is the same all over the world. After the great sacrifices of human life which have been made, the survivors come back to their respective countries, and they are expected to foot the bill here by the Federal Government, which also allows the profiteer to escape. The first regulations suspended under the War Precautions Act were those dealing with price-fixing, and yet the so-called statesmen can find no better way of raising revenue to defray the cost of the war than by taxing to the extent of 33 per cent., on the tickets for the picture shows, the orphan children of soldiers who died 13,000 miles away from home.

I have some figures here disproving the statements of the members of the Opposition that the "go-slow" method is in vogue amongst the workers. Before the war broke out we frequently heard statements made that the workers of Australia were going slow. Then, when the war broke out we were told that they did not enlist in sufficient numbers. Now, when they come back, we are told there would be no objection to pay higher wages if these men did a fair thing. We are also told that the increase in production has been much greater than the increase in wages, and that in Australia to-day, notwithstanding the high taxation which has been placed on the capitalistic classes by the Commonwealth—and particularly by the Queensland Government—these people are a great deal better off than at any previous period in our history. Well, the following is an extract from the "Australian Worker" of Thursday, 10th April, this year:—

"According to an informative bulletin published by 'Knibbs' on 'Production,' there were, in 1911, some 311,710 persons employed in the various factories of the Commonwealth. They received as wages the sum of £27,528,371, and returned to their employers a product value of £133,022,090. It will be seen that the average wage per employee per annum was £92 5s.; and for that wage each employee returned a product value of £427 per annum. In other words, for each £100 produced the workers received a wage of £20 14s."

Yet hon. members opposite are stating that

the worker is getting well paid. The hon. member for Albert described the "splendid conditions" which exist in Australia. One of the doctors who attended to the slum areas in Sydney during the terrible epidemic of pneumonic influenza declared that the slums of Sydney were worse than the slums of any other cities of the world, and yet hon. members opposite say the conditions here are splendid.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then he can never have been to other parts of the world.

Mr. KIRWAN: I have some more figures here which are very interesting, showing the increase in wages and the increase in the cost of living. This is also taken from "Knibbs." The average wage paid in 1911 was 51s. 3d., and the average wage in 1918 was 65s., the percentage increase in 1918, as compared with 1911, being 26.8 per cent. The money required to purchase food compared with 20s. in 1911 was 30s. 3d. in 1918. The decrease in the purchasing power of money in 1918 as compared with 1911 was 51.4 per cent. The increase in the cost of living in 1918 was 10s. 3d., while the increase of wages was only 5s. 4d. These figures reveal an alarming position. They show that, since 1911, while the worker's wage has increased 26.8 per cent. the cost of living has gone up by no less than 51.4 per cent. That is to say, the cost of living has risen by about double the wage increase within seven years. It is clear from that that there is reason for some industrial unrest in the community. The position is that there is profiteering going on. When that was mentioned in this House hon. members opposite sniggered and laughed; but if those hon. members had to live on £3 5s. a week—which I understand is the carters' wage now—they would find some of the disadvantages of it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some farmers have to live on a good deal less.

Mr. KIRWAN: If they have to live on a good deal less, it speaks volumes for the way they were attended to in the past by Liberal Governments. If men have been on the land since Queensland became a State, and the hon. member says they are in such a condition to-day, he had better look up the causes under the administration of past Liberal Governments. These men were not all prosperous when this Government came into power, and they have not all got into a condition of misery since.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They live on less, and then pay your Government land tax.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member knows there is not an atom of truth in that statement; and he knows that the people who are paying the land tax are those who pay his election expenses by large contributions to the party funds.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I pay my own, which you do not do.

Mr. KIRWAN: Possibly, they will not be able to pay the hon. member's election expenses at the coming election, because they will have to find £15,000 for the "stunt" organised in connection with the Merivale street riot.

Mr. CORSER: Give us some more information about it.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman will get all the information he wants about the

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£15,000. This is an extract from an article in the Melbourne "Argus" of 17th June last—

"In business circles the tendency is growing to add to capital account some portion of reserve fund, which in most cases represents the undivided profits of a series of years. Such a transfer increases the solidity of the institutions concerned by imparting permanence to what may be an important asset from the point of view of the creditors. By capitalising reserves used in the conduct of a business its real earning capacity can be better disclosed, and dividends to shareholders can be distributed without exciting the envy of less affluent members of the community. In times of general unrest it is undesirable to create the impression of 'profiteering' in connection with any business, and the declaration of what appears to be a high percentage of yield undoubtedly has this effect. That undesirable result can be avoided by taking steps to prevent the ratio of registered capital to shareholders' total funds falling to too low a level."

Now, there is a clean "give-away" by one of the most Tory journals in Australia. It practically says to the moneyed class who are profiteering, "It is up to you

[5 p.m.] people, if you want to check industrial unrest, to conceal the real amount of money that you are making out of the community." Hon. gentlemen opposite talk about the taxation of this Government. What is the taxation of this Government, or even of the Commonwealth Government, compared with the indirect taxation that is put on the community by those who handle our goods?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: I make this statement, and I challenge contradiction—that while the manhood of Australia were giving their lives on Gallipoli and on the western front, the moneyed class were making sufficient war profits to pay the whole of the war indebtedness incurred.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: Does the hon. gentleman know that some of these people are levying a tremendous amount on the community? Talking about strikes, if the seamen could have got their increase of wages as soon as they asked for it, there would have been no strike. When the shipping combine of Australia decided to increase freights, if the community—including the merchants—had refused to pay the increase, there would have been a strike straight away. They paid that increase straight away. When the stockowners put up the price of meat the community does not think about going on strike against the increased price. They pay it. The only time it is wrong to strike is when the worker strikes on behalf of his wife and kiddies to get them a decent living wage or decent conditions for himself. Then the whole force of the State must be employed to crush him. Those of us who followed the developments in connection with the report of the Interstate Commission on fixing the price of meat will remember that, when that Commission brought up their first report, it was shelved by "Billy Hughes." The force of public opinion compelled him to move again. He asked the Commission

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for a second report. They reported a second time, in just as emphatic language, that the meat of Australia should not be at a higher price than that at which they were supplying the Imperial Government for the use of the troops. What did the stockowners do? Did they say, "Well, the manhood of Australia are sacrificing their lives on the western front. It is up to us to show our loyalty to the Empire, our love and reverence to the dear old motherland, and, above all, to the dear old Union Jack?" No. They said to the Prime Minister, "Not one head of stock will come into the yards in either Sydney or Melbourne until we get out price." The Prime Minister rode the high horse, and said he was going to seize the stock. Instead of that he ordered the distribution of frozen meat in Melbourne. Seven trainloads of stockowners to protest against the fixation of meat prices came to Melbourne. When he applied for reinforcements, there were not seven trainloads. If they had sent those chaps to the front, and they had charged the German troops as they have been charging the consuming public of Australia during the four years of the war, the war would have been ended in the first year.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did not the country send a very much bigger proportion of men than the city?

Mr. KIRWAN: No, they did not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say they did.

Mr. KIRWAN: I say they did not. The hon. gentleman is wrong again, as he always is. I appeal to the records of the soldiers' vote in connection with the last Federal election when the Brisbane division, which Mr. Finlayson won by a narrow majority, with one exception contributed the largest number of soldiers' votes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because a good many did not have an opportunity to vote.

Mr. KIRWAN: There were more soldiers voted for Brisbane than for the Darling Downs, or any other country constituency.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because they did not get the opportunity to vote.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman cannot shuffle. I say the figures in connection with the voting at the last Federal election show that, with one exception in Australia, the Brisbane division had the largest number of soldiers at the front who recorded their votes. The hon. gentleman can find proof of my statement in the library.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That proves nothing.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. gentleman distinctly said that Brisbane did not contribute any soldiers to the war. I say he is telling a deliberate untruth, and he knows it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not.

Mr. KIRWAN: Coming back to the beef question, and the strike of the stockowners. The Government then withdrew their price list and referred the matter to the price-fixing Minister. They ignored the two reports of their own Interstate Commission, and they issued a price list, which increased the price of meat all round by 1d. per lb. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, in your quiet moments, the tremendous sacrifices made by the beef barons of Australia—the men who said that all the available manhood should be got by the scruff of the neck and sent away, whether they liked it or not, while they sat back and exploited the community

and had to be threatened with compulsion if they did not contribute to the last war loan?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does not that apply to your Brisbane merchants?

Mr. KIRWAN: If the cap fits, they can wear it, and so can the hon. gentleman. With regard to profiteering, we pride ourselves on our advanced ideas. I find a cable in an American paper deals with profiteers in Austria. It says—

“The infuriated populace in Prague erected gallows in the principal streets, whither they conducted fifty-seven food profiteers and threatened to hang them unless they took the oath that they would sell their wares at reasonable prices. All the alleged profiteers took the oath.”

In all parts of the civilised world—even in Japan—the workers are getting into line for a determined stand in connection with food profiteering. No less a person than Harold Spender, in an article in “The Nineteenth Century,” quite recently stated that the Parliaments of the world to-day are on trial, and the acid test is being put on them, and, except they deal with these complex problems which have arisen out of this great war, direct action will follow, and the people will not tolerate any shilly-shallying so far as the settlement of these big questions is concerned. I hope that the Bill which is to be introduced by the Secretary for Public Instruction will provide for the gaoling of such persons. If a man gets six months’ imprisonment for carrying the red flag, then a person who is guilty of profiteering should be liable to six years’ imprisonment. The red flag was carried in England during the war without any objection being taken to persons doing that; but here that flag has been proscribed, although it has always been the emblem of the working classes.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: All your Government did was to steal the farmers’ butter.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is a deliberate untruth. I ask the hon. member is it not a fact that the cream suppliers in Queensland got more for their cream when the Queensland Government took control of the butter than they got when the Federal Government assumed control of the business?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are talking about things you know nothing about.

Mr. KIRWAN: What I have stated is absolutely correct, and the hon. member knows it. Now, I want to touch upon some of the profits which have been made by capitalists in Australia, and in doing this I intend to quote a paragraph from the Melbourne “Age” of 13th June of last year. That journal said—

“The pastoral industry, and those who control it, have found the war period, which has brought loss and affliction to others, one of magnificent profits. The annual value of the wool clip during the good seasons through which we are passing has been about double what it was in ordinary years previously. Those who hold the lands of the country, and own its flocks, are enjoying phenomenal prosperity. The wealth which has come to them has brought its obligations—obligations towards the great mass of the people, the valour of whose manhood has earned British recognition, and who, in numerous cases, are struggling hard against the pinching cost of living. When

they are thus assured of millions for which they could not reasonably have hoped at the time that the war burst upon the country, it is a sad reflection that some of the land and stock owners are waging a violent opposition to a reduction of the exorbitant price of meat, for which the Australian people are being charged nearly double the profitable prices ruling for export. These misguided men, whose mistaken policy may afflict this country with bitter class hatreds, may reasonably be asked to take a broader and more generous view of the demands of public spirit and patriotism. Great Britain has provided them with rich markets for their wool, meat, and wheat, and as the basis of their munificent profits is the land of this country, those markets should not be used to raise prices against the people of Australia.”

Let us consider what were the profits of the persons mentioned, always bearing in mind the doctrine preached in the daily Press about the necessity for sacrifice. We want always to keep in view the fact that 95 per cent. of the men who went to the front belonged to the working classes, that they were risking their lives for the protection of the property belonging to capitalists, and were prepared to take 5s. a day though they had been getting from £4 to £5 a week. The people from whom those soldiers were drawn had the courage to vote against conscription. I am proud of the part that I played in the anti-conscription campaign. When the German forces were driving an awful wedge between the allies in the vicinity of Amiens, the commanding officer called up the four divisions of the only volunteer army on the western front to face the onrush of the German invader. Those men travelled many miles in a few days, captured 25,000 prisoners and a number of guns, and they constituted the only volunteer army on the western front. They were placed in the gap, and, to their credit for all time be it said, they stopped the onrush of the Germans. If hon. gentlemen opposite had their way, we would have had no volunteer army on the western front, and we would not be sitting here now discussing the Address in Reply. When the history of Australia comes to be written, and the part that Australia has played in that titanic war is placed in its proper perspective, I believe that the men who took the foremost part in the anti-conscription campaign will be hailed with honour, while those who advocated conscription will receive a well-merited rebuke. I have here some figures showing the value of the Australian wool clip. In 1913-14 it was £26,079,536, in 1916-17 it was £45,631,102, in 1917-18 it was £42,662,137, and in 1918-19 it was £49,500,000. The increase in value compared with pre-war years was £19,551,566 in 1916-17, £16,582,601 in 1917-18, and £23,420,464 in 1918-19, making a total increase of £59,554,631. The “Pastoralist” Review, which is the official organ of the squatters, makes this comment on the matter—

“We have become so accustomed to the enormous prices which have ruled throughout the year that we sometimes fail to appreciate how high they have really been.”

And those are the men who want to use the most drastic powers possessed by a constitutional Government to drive back the

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seamen to man the ships before their wages are increased! The figures that have been published by the Interstate Commission on the meat question show that stockowners received an additional sum of £27,000,000 for the year 1915-16 as against the amount they received in the year 1913. Allowing that they received a similar amount for 1917-18, that would mean a total war profit as a result of increased prices amounting to about £54,000,000.

Let me here give an illustration of the profits made by the New South Wales coalowners. The following is an extract from the report of the Commonwealth Commissioner for Taxation, published in the daily Press on the 21st December, 1918:—

“By far the most profitable concerns in Australia were the mines of New South Wales, which produced 151 per cent. profit to capital in war time, as against 54 per cent. in pre-war days.”

I now propose to show how the Edmunds award worked out, as set forth in a set of figures compiled by Mr. H. M. Murphy, the secretary of the Department of Labour, in Melbourne, and published in his “Wages and Prices in Australia.” There it is shown that—

“Colliery owners received as a result of 3s. per ton increase allowed when wages were increased ...	£1,350,000
Miners received as increased wages	£390,000
Extra and additional profits received by coalowners, after paying increase in wages	£960,000.”

In April last the coalminers received another increase of wages as the result of the Melbourne conference convened by Mr. Watt, and the coalowners also received an increase in the price of coal. The additional increase in the price of coal meant a further return to the coalowners of New South Wales of an amount equal to £1,070,212. The increase of wages totalled £500,000, so that the additional profits received by coalowners after paying the increased wages were £570,212. The total increased return to coalowners as the result of the Edmunds award and the increase of wages granted by the Melbourne conference was £2,420,212. The total increase of wages granted by the Edmunds award and the Melbourne conference was £890,000, so that the additional profits collected by the coalowners, after paying the increased wages, amounted to £1,530,212. The figures I have quoted prove that the coalowners and the stockowners have done very well out of the war. And now we have the spectacle of those people addressing the workers and asking them to subscribe to the new war loan! As a matter of fact, the workers are not getting enough to live on, and only recently we saw a statement in the Sydney “Sun” that, as a result of the wholesale buying up of Australian hides, the price of boots would go up 10s. at the next rise. Those Australian hides were being cornered prior to the lifting of the embargo, and those “in the know” knew that the Commonwealth Government would be very obliging in the matter of raising it, and they bought up every hide they could; and it was stated in Sydney the other day, I think by Mr. Anderson, that quite a number of those hides are going to Germany. Of course, we were not

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going to trade with Germany! But nobody believed that for one moment—not even the men who made the statement. Not for one moment did they seriously believe that a trade boycott was going to come into operation. The Sydney “Sun” tells us that boots are going up 10s.; I do not know whether the workers’ wages will go up. I am perfectly satisfied they will not.

Reference has been made to the peace terms. I am one of those who were very glad to see the war ended. I do not know that the objects for which it was started have been realised; I am quite satisfied they have not. We were told that we went to war for the rights of small nations, and, above all things, to maintain the sacredness of treaties. Nobody believes that to-day. As a matter of fact, treaties that have been made have been smashed since, and secret treaties have been made that are being kept. The armistice was signed on the basis of the famous fourteen points, but I challenge any man who analyses the peace agreement to find any of them in it, with the exception of one or two. Talk about a “take down”! Talk about smashing the treaty with Belgium! It is as nothing compared with the smashing of the terms of the armistice by those gentlemen who stood on the public platform and preached of the necessity for morality in public questions.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Do you think that Belgium should have stood the whole of her loss?

Mr. KIRWAN: As a matter of fact, Belgium is complaining that the allies have turned her down, and are not doing the square thing by her. The hon. member has had the opportunity of reading the peace terms and the comments made on them.

Mr. MULLAN: He will not be able to read them all, because there are some secret clauses.

Mr. KIRWAN: As I have stated, those fourteen points were agreed to, but from this extract in front of me I find that, with two exceptions, they have been thrown overboard. I was given to understand that, when Prussian militarism was destroyed, everything would go well. As a matter of fact, we have had Prussian militarism in our own Commonwealth and in New Zealand. We have Prussian militarism to-day under the Union Jack!

Mr. VOWLES: Under the Trades Hall to-day, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes, plenty of it.

Mr. KIRWAN: The conscientious objectors of New Zealand were treated in a manner nothing short of scandalous, and I challenge the hon. member for Drayton to quote anything in the treatment of British prisoners in German camps to come near the conditions in New Zealand or in our own Commonwealth.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How is it that your side always favour the enemy?

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member has made the statement that this party favour the enemy.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Hear! hear!

Mr. KIRWAN: And the hon. member for Bulimba says, “Hear! hear!”

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In all your speeches. Trace every one of your speeches.

Mr. GLEDSON: Who is the enemy of the working man?

Mr. KIRWAN: Why, a few years ago the German was worshipped by gentlemen opposite. Take a leading English opinion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There are worse enemies than the Germans, and they are your party.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am quoting now an opinion of the German people by no less a person than Dean Stanley in his "Life of Dr. Arnold, D.D.," and I want to ask the hon. member for Drayton how it was that these people suddenly changed immediately the war broke out—

"The land of our Saxon and Teutonic forefathers, Germany, is the birthplace of the most moral race of men that the world has yet seen, of the soundest laws, the least violent passions, and the fairest domestic and civil virtues. The Teutonic nation, the regenerating element in modern Europe—safe and free."

The TREASURER: Who were the Government who bought the German dredges?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Hush! hush!

Mr. KIRWAN: I want to point out that the Labour party cannot be blamed for the war—they are blamed for a good many things. I want to say that the British ruling class, as distinct from the British nation—and I say it emphatically—are the people responsible for the war. Take some of their diplomacy. When it was proposed to butt the Turk out of Europe, bag and baggage, who saved him? Disraeli! Who were the men who sacrificed their lives on the ridges of Gallipoli to rectify it? The Australians. Who helped to build up the German nation, which is referred to in the Governor's Speech as a formidable opponent? I quote from the "Encyclopædia Britannica," Ninth Edition, page 197—

"September 13, 1865.

"My dear Russell.—It was dishonest and unjust to deprive Denmark of Schleswig and Holstein. It is another question how those two duchies, when separated from Denmark, can be disposed of best for the interest of Europe. I should say that, with that view, it is better that they should go to increase the power of Prussia than that they should form another little State to be added to the cluster of small bodies politic which encumber Germany, and render it of less force than it ought to be in the general balance of power in the world. Prussia is too weak as she now is ever to be honest or independent in her action; and, with a view to the future, it is desirable that Germany, in the aggregate, should be strong, in order to control those two ambitious and aggressive powers, France and Russia, that press upon her west and east."

Our late allies!

"As to France, we know how restless and aggressive she is, and how ready to break loose for Belgium, for the Rhine, for anything she would be likely to get without too great an exertion. As to Russia, she will, in due time, become a power almost as great as the old Roman Empire. She can become mistress of all Asia, except British India, whenever she chooses to take it; and when enlightened arrangements shall have made her revenue proportioned to her territory, and railways

shall have abridged distances, her command of men will become enormous, her pecuniary means gigantic, and her power of transporting armies over great distances most formidable. Germany ought to be strong in order to resist Russian aggression, and a strong Prussia is essential to German strength. Therefore, though I heartily condemn the whole of the proceedings of Austria and Prussia about the duchies, I own that I should rather see them incorporated with Prussia than converted into an additional asteroid in the system of Europe. Yours sincerely,

"PALMERSTON."

Lord Palmerston! Hon. members opposite talk about the alleged pro-German tendencies of this party. It is a well-known fact that they sent immigration agents to Germany to bring Germans out here, and now the Government are deporting them at the people's expense. It is well known that they gave them special grants of land—the Binjour Plateau, for instance. I remember that during my time at the Central Station I saw a special train placed at their disposal. I never saw any special trains for British subjects; they were allowed to go to the station and get to the different portions of Queensland as best they could.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: After or before the war?

Mr. KIRWAN: Before the war; and, if they are such splendid chaps, what have they done since?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Look at what they have done.

Mr. KIRWAN: The hon. member is one of those who said we should not trade with Germany. Yet we read that the British Government are giving special concessions to enable the commercial classes to trade with Germany, and we read in the columns of the daily Press that they are anxious to know what the Australian Government are going to do. As a matter of fact, the allies put up in Austria a few days ago a representative of the Royal family that we denounced a few months ago. The allies are putting him up because he will see that the bondholders will get their "cut." Turkey was kept in Europe because the bondholders wanted their interest. The Archduke Joseph is put on the throne of Hungary because it is better than to have a Soviet Government, and I am prepared to bet that, if it is necessary to guarantee the interest of the British bondholders and the bondholders of the allies, the Kaiser will go back on the throne of Germany.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): At the outset I wish to qualify a statement I made on a previous occasion, and that was that, if the platform of the party opposite was put into full operation, hon. [5.30 p.m.] members on the other side would be a greater enemy to the farmers and producers of Queensland than those whom we were fighting on the western front, because, had our country been conquered by the Germans, they would have come here and taken a portion of our farms to pay the war debt; Brisbane to-day would have been occupied with foreign troops to see that they got it. But hon. members opposite, or rather the force behind them,

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make no secret of the fact that, if they got into power, they would take the lot. They admit that they are going to abolish private ownership.

Mr. GLEDSON: You will wake up presently.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is part of the platform of the people who put you into power. Therefore I was justified in making the statement I did that we have worse enemies than those whom we were fighting on the western front.

So far as the Address in Reply is concerned, the first thing referred to is the war. We are all glad that the war is over. A burden seemed to be lifted from everyone's mind when peace was proclaimed. The sisters and friends of those boys who went to the front were always afraid of seeing the minister or any member of the police come to the house for fear they were bringing bad news, because those were the people who did bring the news; and they were afraid almost to receive the postman. I know of one instance where a telegram was delivered to a house, and the daughter said to the postman, "Open it; I cannot." She firmly believed that it was a telegram sent to say that her brother had been killed. That shows something of the burden which was borne by the people, and that great weight was lifted by the proclamation of peace. It is most unfortunate that some families suffered so heavily, but we are glad that others escaped so lightly. We know that the Australian lads who went to the front have laid a new foundation for Australia, and we have to be careful how we build on that foundation. That new foundation has been laid in the blood and tears of the nation. We can hardly realise what has been done. Australia's greatest day was the 8th August, 1918, when, as the hon. member for Brisbane said—but perhaps not quite correctly because the Australian was not the only army that was thrown against the victorious German army—150,000 British troops lay dead and wounded on the battlefield and the victorious German army was surging on when four different armies, besides the Australian army, were thrown against them. But the Australian army withstood the greatest shock that any troops in the world ever stopped, because it was the shock of a victorious army that had already marched over the dead bodies of 150,000 Britishers. The hon. member talked about troops retreating. We know that, when the German and Austrian armies had had six months to bring the whole of their forces to the western front and to bring the whole of their thousands and thousands of guns and concentrate them practically on one point, no power in the world could stop them. Lieut. O'Brien said to me one day, "It is no use sending young lads of from eighteen or nineteen to the front, as they will be driven mad. They cannot stand the bombardment." Therefore is it any wonder that men brought up in the slums of London and under similar conditions could not stand the terrific bombardment? Australia has a big advantage in that connection, and Australia will stand as the only country that sent her industrial workers to the front and let her loafers stay behind. She will be the only country in the world where the football clubs, tennis clubs, and other things were closed while the numbers on the racecourses never diminished. There was no reduction in numbers there; there was no reduction in the

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number of men holding up lamp posts in the cities; there was no reduction in the numbers visiting the public-houses. They all kept up their full quota while farmers in the country, seventy or eighty years of age, had to drive their own teams while their sons were away at the front. That is something of which we cannot be proud. We cannot realise what our boys went through. If we turn from the western front to Palestine, we find that men were tried to an extent that men were never tried before. And not only our Australian lads, but our Australian horses as well should receive a word of praise. Many times for three solid days on end those horses travelled over the desert without water. On one occasion, when they had been three and a-half days without water and were passing a well, one of the boys who was very fond of his horse said, "In spite of any instructions from the enemy's guns or from our own officers, I am going to give my horse a drink at that well." He started out to give his horse a drink, and while he got a bucket of water up from the well his horse laid down, and when he turned round the horse was dead. A shell struck the ground a few yards from the lad, but he jumped up behind another horse-man quite cheerfully. Whilst all these things were going on; whilst the British army had its back to the wall; whilst 10,000 Australian horsemen lived on three biscuits a day each for ten days; whilst these men were practically hemmed in by the enemy, what was the party opposite, who talked so much about the matter, doing?

Mr. KIRWAN: What were your friends doing? Profiteering.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We want to get down to facts. Here is a report of the speech made by the Premier in London, which reads—

"The Premier of Queensland (Mr. Ryan), when on a visit to the west front in June, 1916, addressed the Anzacs at three different points of the fighting line. In the course of his address he told the men 'that their country was proud of their achievement, and he was confident that they would win fresh laurels. He assured them that Australia would send reinforcements until the disturber of the world's peace was incapable of further mischief.'"

That is the Premier in England when he was addressing British troops and when he was free from the pressure of the Trades Hall. Mr. Ryan was then Mr. Ryan, a private citizen; and I have no doubt that, when the hon. gentleman made those remarks, he meant every word he said. Now, let us take Mr. Ryan and other hon. members at a later date. At the time when the British troops had their backs to the wall; when our men were practically perishing in Palestine, what course did they take? When they stated that they did not agree with conscription they were asked to assist in getting volunteers to relieve the men at the front. Was the system that New Zealand had under conscription better or worse? The same ships that conveyed troops to the front brought weary men back. Those men did not stay in the line as long as Australians did. The Australians, when the reserves were not coming up, had to stay there.

Mr. KIRWAN: How is it that Australians did better than New Zealanders, and that Australia sent more men than New Zealand?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Australians sent a less percentage in comparison to population than New Zealand did. The men came back quicker to New Zealand and were better looked after. I have the evidence of my own son from Palestine, who said the New Zealanders were looked after and relieved by their Government far better than the Australians were. The hon. member is a man who stayed here and had things comfortable, and there is no reason why he should speak of the discomforts of the men at the front. The man who has gone to the front and has suffered for four years stands far ahead of the hon. member, who has had things comfortable.

Mr. KIRWAN: When they come back they will have no time for you.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What position did the party opposite take up?

Mr. GILDAY: My lad is over there, but he does not give you any thanks for it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Perhaps he will not; we gave him credit for his action. I am talking of what I know; I do not want to talk about what somebody else has told me. I speak about men who can be referred to if anything wrong is said. I do not say that somebody told me down the street; I want to get the truth. What was the attitude which hon. members opposite took up when we were very nearly losing the war—when the war stood in the balance and no one could say which way it would go? They did everything they possibly could to stop comforts being sent to the men.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is a lie.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They did everything they could to discourage the men.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is an untruth.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Brisbane was the first to state in this House that he hoped something would be done to reduce the interest on war loans. Was that not discouraging people from subscribing to the war loans? How could men be supplied with comforts and be paid if there were no war loans? The hon. member was quite willing to pay 16 per cent. to the breweries, and 100 per cent. to some of the profiteers, but when it came to contributing money for the comforts and the payment of the soldier, he thought 4½ per cent. was too much.

Mr. KIRWAN: So it is, and I say so now.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If that was not discouraging the sending of comforts to our men, then I say nothing was. Here is the official programme of the Perth conference, and it was written by a Labour man and sent to the people of England. I will read it as shortly as I can.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: And read it as correctly as you can.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If I may, I will read the whole—

“REFERENDUM ON RESOLUTION OF INTER-STATE CONFERENCE, 1918.
“BALLOT PAPER.

“The following resolution, after careful consideration, was carried by the interstate conference of the Australian Labour Party meeting at Perth, June, 1918—”

Mr. KIRWAN: They have won every by-election since.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In June, 1918, the war was in the balance, and no one knew which way it would go—

“It was decided to refer it to the organisation membership for approval”—
As if the enemy would wait until they sent it for approval!

“And the conference earnestly recommend you to vote ‘Yes.’ If you wish to vote ‘Yes,’ put a cross (‘X’) in the square opposite the word ‘Yes’ below. If you wish to vote ‘No,’ put a cross (‘X’) in the square opposite the word ‘No’ below.”

Here is the resolution—

“Further participation in recruiting shall be subject to the following conditions:—

(a) That a clear and authoritative statement be made on behalf of the allies, asserting their readiness to enter into peace negotiations, upon a basis of no annexations and no penal indemnities.”

No annexations and no penal indemnities! And then the Premier comes back from England and complains that Australia has spent £120,000,000 that they should get back before anyone else got any. Let me quote what the working man who wrote this letter said about it—

“If this condition were actually to be put to the people of France, they—not fully understanding the psychology of our particular brand of advanced democracy—would rub their eyes in astonishment and say, ‘This is not the voice of Australia. We know the Australians. They have done—they are at this moment doing—great things on our sacred soil. They have lived among us, great-hearted, genial giants; friends and brothers to our womenfolk and little ones behind the lines; magnificent warriors, and true comrades in the field. This must be some lesser breed, masquerading in their great name and bringing shame upon it. We do not know them, and have not time to listen to their craven voice.’”

When you look at the things that were happening at the time at the front, what were the men who passed that resolution? Were they cowards or traitors?

Mr. KIRWAN: They had sons at the front.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of them may have had.

Mr. KIRWAN: The majority had. Why don't you tell the truth?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If that had been carried out, Brisbane to-day would have been occupied by foreign troops, and so would practically every country in the British Empire; the war was in the balance, and no one knew which way it would go.

Mr. FOLEY: That is all bunkum.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member knows that the allied troops occupy the enemy country to-day, and, if we had lost, the enemy troops would have occupied our country. The people want to know whether hon. members opposite stand for the platform which has been adopted at the interstate socialistic meetings, or whether they stand for what they seem to be in caucus. There seems to be a very big difference.

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To show the difference, and that they are ashamed of their platform, as they know it is not good for Australia, here are the words of the Premier at the last interstate conference.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Which Premier?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Hon. T. J. Ryan.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: A good man, too.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A good man, but badly led. (Government laughter and interjections.) There is a big difference between being led and pushed. As everyone knows, the Premier came straight from the International Socialists' Conference at Amsterdam, to the meeting in Sydney. There is an article in the "Daily Mail" to-day, and I would like to claim from the Speaker the privilege which the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for Burnett claimed yesterday, but perhaps it would be hardly fair. It is only two columns, but I am afraid, if I asked, the House would not give me permission to have it inserted in "Hansard." It is a splendid article. In any case, I will read just this paragraph—

"So Mr. Ryan is at the International Socialists' congress at Amsterdam. It is a notable occasion. It is the more notable because it is in Amsterdam, for Amsterdam is, as well as the headquarters of the International Socialists, at the present moment the propaganda centre in western Europe for Bolshevism, and the meeting-ground for all the disciples of disorder, who found it well to desert Switzerland a little while ago. Turn back through the cables of the early days of the armistice, and you will find traces of the International Socialists at work; of their leader, Treelstra, seeking to establish Bolshevism in Holland, and overthrow the monarchy. At any rate, for the first time, we are to find a Minister of the Crown of a British dominion associating with (even if he may not support their doctrine) elements which have for their policy the overthrow of all constituted authority and its replacement by a system which, at best, is a species of anarchy."

I want hon. gentlemen to come out of their shell and admit—as some of them do—that they belong to the International Socialist party. Then, when they admit it and we get the platform of the International Socialist party and the One Big Union—which are practically the same—we shall know just where we stand. They have made attempts to cover that up. I will now refer to some remarks of the Premier at the eighth interstate conference held recently, I believe, in Sydney. There was an attempt made to alter the objective of the federal union.

Mr. KIRWAN: Wrong again. You do not know the A B C of it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say there was an attempt made to alter the objective. I will give Mr. Ryan's own words. Surely he would not be wrong—

"Mr. Ryan (Queensland Premier) thought that, if the objective was left as it was at present, it would be better for those who had to do the fighting in the country."

He did not want the plain facts put before

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the country. He said it would be better for those who had to do the fighting in the country.

Mr. KIRWAN: I do not believe he said that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This is a statement from your Sydney "Worker."

Mr. KIRWAN: What date?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will give you the date by and by.

Mr. KIRWAN: I would not believe anything you said if you swore it on a stack of Bibles.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The quotation continues—

"It was all right so long as they understood what it stood for."

Did we ever hear of a greater attempt made to delude the public?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Except that which you are making now.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let them have a conference and have it in private. As long as we know what their platform stands for, it is all right. I might say that at the time of this conference this particular paragraph was put in all the papers of Queensland, taken from the "Worker," so I am not the first to bring it forward. He further said—

"If it were altered, men like Hughes and Holman would be able to tear it to pieces, and try and get in their talk about Bolshevism."

Now, let us go on further and show what he tried to cover up. When they had put on all the camouflage they possibly could, there was still an outlet open for us to see what they meant. Will the hon. member for Brisbane check this resolution, No. 2, which was carried at the interstate conference?—

"Collective ownership and democratic control of the collectively used agencies of production, distribution, and exchange."

Mr. KIRWAN: Great Scott! That was passed as far back as 1888! Have you only discovered that now?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I discovered it a long while ago, but I want the people to know exactly how they stand. Some of you have denied over and over again that you want to abolish private ownership. I will read from a book, "The One Big Union. Will it Emancipate the Worker?" by P. S. Cleary, president of the Catholic Federation. Here are some of their declarations—

"There can be no peace so long as want and hunger are found among millions of working people, and the few who constitute the employing class have all the good things of life."

That is from the platform passed by their supporters.

The ACTING PREMIER: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: By the One Big Union. Has not the Queensland Railway Union decided to fall in with that union?

The ACTING PREMIER: You are a leg-puller, all right.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did not the Queensland Railway Union, at their last meeting here, decide to take a ballot in August on the question of joining the One Big Union?

Certainly, they did. They have not taken the ballot yet. This work goes on—

“Between these two classes the struggle must continue until capitalism is abolished. Capitalism can only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary, industrial, and political action.”

They make this very plain. They leave it so that the people can see it, while other people try to cover it up. These people are more conscientious. They say, “If we are going for a thing, let the people know.” They go so far as to say what “revolutionary action” means. They say—

“‘Revolutionary action’ means action to secure a complete change—namely, the abolition of capitalistic ownership of the means of production—whether privately or through the State—and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community. Long experience has proved the hopeless futility of existing political and industrial methods, which aim at mending and rendering tolerable and thereby perpetuating capitalism, instead of ending it.”

Hon. J. M. HUNTER: They would take away the State butchers’ shops.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is part of their platform.

The ACTING PREMIER: No.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Do you say they do not support you? Is not that the platform of your supporters? Do you not get the support of the Queensland Railway Union?

The ACTING PREMIER: That is not our platform.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We do not know what your platform is. You are covering your platform up. Here is an extract from the “Daily Mail” of the 21st February, 1919—

“Mr. Sampson moved, and Mr. O’Brien seconded—‘That the Queensland Railway Union constitution be amended so as to bring it in accord with the constitution laid down by the One Big Union Congress, Brisbane, 1918.’”

(Sitting suspended from 6 to 7 p.m.)

That shows that the Queensland Railway Union has practically adopted the policy of the One Big Union, or the I.W.W. policy, and I would ask: What is the present Government but a Government of international socialists? The report to which I have just referred further says—

“Mr. Beatson said that if the preceding speaker would help conference as well as he denounced the Government, conference might get along much better. The trouble was that railway men could not agree amongst themselves, and consequently could not hope in that condition to get anywhere. He saw the way to a solution of their preliminary difficulties by the abolition of the Upper House. Then they would commence to get rid of their machinery, and have the One Big Union in the Railway Department.”

Why do members opposite try to deny the position they occupy in this matter? The same men who urge people to live on the

Government admit that the Queensland Railway Union wants to become part of the One Big Union, and the Premier is reported in the Press as having said that he did not object to extremists, who only wanted to go a little faster than the other members of the party. It comes to this—that the platform of that party includes as a plank the abolition of private ownership, and, of course, the destruction of the wages system must follow. What then?

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Happiness.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is important that the people of Queensland should know what will be the conditions of life if the Labour party’s platform is brought into existence. When private ownership is abolished, wages will be no good, and we shall have nothing left but the ticket system. A man will have to work and get a ticket for his supplies. We are told by the leading spirits of the party that such tickets will only be endorsed for a fortnight, the reason given being that otherwise some men may become the owners of a number of tickets. Recently there was a discussion between the “Daily Standard” and “The Worker” as to the limitation of property that might be held by one man. The “Standard” argued that the worker should own nothing, while the “Worker” urged that he should own his clothes and a tooth brush. If such a proposal were carried into effect, then we should have a nation whose richest men would own only their clothes and a toothbrush. Is that a condition of things at which we should aim? Can anyone say that it is a condition of things at which we should aim? If that is all that Labour has to aim at, then Labour is bankrupt. An official organ of the Labour party—an organ that is the bible of the party—has declared that men should have no country. I say that a man who has no country cannot be a good Australian. When the hon. member for Brisbane was speaking before tea he gave the impression that I had said that Brisbane had not sent any soldiers to the front. I say they have sent some soldiers to the front, and that some parents have sent all their sons.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am glad you are making an apology to them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not an apology.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not an apology, and I say that the hon. gentleman’s electorate did not furnish anything like the percentage of money or recruits that the country electorates have furnished. Here is a statement which was published in the “Daily Standard,” on 26th February, 1916. I shall have to omit reading some parts of this precious article, as my time is short, but I must quote the following extracts:—

“The workers have no country. The differences which exist between present countries are all superficial differences. The capitalist regime is the same in all countries—the plutarians who give their lives for the present countries—stupid brutes.”

This was said during the war—the report continues—

“The only war which is not a deception is that at the end of which, if they are victors, the workers may hope by the appropriation of the capitalist class

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to put their hands on the social wealth accumulated by human genius for generations past."

Is that not robbery? Hon. members opposite do not advise the worker to work as I do.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You don't work.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do work, and I have never got a shilling that I have not earned. Is that not an incentive to robbery? Instead of encouraging men to be industrious and save their money and invest it and so employ other labour, their policy is to steal from somebody else—rob other people! Is that the education that the Trades Hall is giving to its people?

"There is only one war that is worthy of intelligent men—that is, social revolution."

And this was put in big letters so that nobody would miss it—

"Whoever be the aggressor, insurrection rather than war."

That was at a time when the Australian and the British had their backs to the wall and we did not know which way the war was going—

"There you have the gospel of internationalism as preached by the local internationalists and by the 'Daily Standard,' owned and controlled by the unions and official organ of the Queensland industrial movement. You will note that all our sons and brothers and husbands and sweethearts who died on Gallipoli and in the fields of France and Flanders are, according to that doctrine, 'dupes—stupid brutes.'"

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Is that from the "Standard"?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, that is not.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You are wilfully misleading the House.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am reading comment on the "Standard" article. Anybody who had any brains could see the difference between the two. (Laughter.) We have fastened hon. members down to their international objective. Once they get their programme on the statute-book private ownership is to be abolished, and all the means of production are to be seized; everything is to go into the melting-pot. Let us see what are the means of production. The first is the bank balance. (Government laughter.) You cannot get on without money. In 1916-17, 2,671,000 persons had accounts amounting to £107,036,698, so that over half the population of Australia had accounts. All those bank accounts would go into the melting-pot. Land is another means of production; cattle, stock of all kinds, implements, are means of production, and would be seized and go into the melting-pot. Those are the means which the farmer uses to produce his wealth, and the programme of hon. members is to seize them by any revolutionary or constitutional means they can—any means at all so long as they get them. Let us see what happened in the country where their programme was carried out. Hungary is about the only country where it has been carried out. On the 26th March the people went to bed owning all their property, as we do to-night. They had no legislating bodies, practically speaking. All opposition had been abolished, and there was only the Soviet Parliament. They had merely what Mr.

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Walsh, of the Seamen's Union, and hundreds of others of his kidney are trying to introduce into Australia—Soviet Government. During the night of the 26th the Soviets passed a law confiscating all property and abolishing all ownership; and, when the people got up next morning, their signatures to their banking accounts or anything else were not acknowledged. They owned nothing. When they made any claim to their money or property, they were simply told that a law had been passed during the night abolishing their claims. (Interruption.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If hon. members opposite had their way, that is just exactly what would happen in Australia. If they could abolish the Legislative Council, get rid of the Governor—get rid, perhaps, of some of the Opposition here—(Government laughter)—and set up their Soviet Government, that would happen in one night. The people would get up one morning and find that the Government owned everything. That is not a state of civilisation that we want to bring about in Queensland; and, when we find that that is the end of their programme, that that is as far as they can go, I say that Labour is bankrupt, and we need to get something better.

Mr. F. A. COOPER interjected.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They confiscated everything in Hungary. All the people had was the hunger in their empty bellies. A few men like the hon. member brought that about.

The SPEAKER: Order! I wish the hon. member would address me, and not the hon. member for Bremer.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We pass on to the reference in the Speech to the profiteer. If I had my way with the man who made huge profits during the war while our lads were fighting, I would hang him. I would make short work of him. (Laughter.) I would not care if he was the Premier, or who he was. I would hang him. (Loud laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: But you have to deal with the profiteer, not merely on the amount that he is making, because he may turn over a tremendous lot of business, and, with a very small rate of profit on the turnover, make a lot of money. You have to consider the percentage he makes on each article. The present Government bought meat—or I would not say they bought it; they commandeered it—at 3d. and 3½d. per lb. and sold it at up to 8d., or an average profit of 100 per cent. for handing it over the counter. Those are the facts according to their published prices. (Government laughter.) It took more to hand the meat over the counter than to rear the bullock on the farm or the station, bring him down by train to the meatworks, kill and dress him, and send him to the city; it took more to cut him up and pass him over the counter than to do all those things. If that is not profiteering, then I do not know what is. Then I will take the buns that they sell in their refreshment rooms. They buy them at 7½d. a dozen, put a little butter on them, and then charge 3d. They sell them at 3s. per dozen, and, when you allow for the butter, they make 200 per cent. for handing

the buns over the counter. The flour is produced on the farm; we have it gristed at the mill; the butter is made at the factory, and everything else is done for the 7½d. per dozen, and then the Government want twice as much for handing it over the counter as the whole cost of production. If that is not profiteering, I do not know what is. Now, we will take matches. (Laughter.) If you ask for a box of matches at any of the railway refreshment-rooms, you are charged 6d., while you can get a box for ½d. at any little shop in any town you like.

Mr. KIRWAN: Wrong again.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am speaking of the time when I purchased a box of matches at a railway refreshment-room. That is about a year ago, and at that time I could go into any little shop and buy a box of matches for ½d., while the refreshment-rooms conducted by the Queensland Government charge 6d., or a profit of something like 1,200 per cent. (Government laughter.) The Secretary for Railways, in answer to a question in this House, admitted that that was the price charged. Now we get down to the remedy. What course are they going to take? Are they going to bring in a Bill to prosecute themselves? We on this side of the House have no sympathy for profiteers, and if we had been in power five years ago, a Bill would have been brought in to prevent profiteering. Hon. members opposite promised to do so, but they brought in nothing at all. As I said this afternoon, the only thing they did was to seize the poor farmers' butter when he was only making a bare living. The Government will receive every support, so far as I am concerned, in dealing with any profiteer, and, as I said before, if I had my way, I would hang any man who made huge profits during the war.

Mr. KIRWAN: If you did, all your friends would be strung up.

Mr. JAMES: What about the butter pool?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The butter pool has saved some farmers from starvation. The hon. member represents a farming district, and if he does not agree with the butter pool, let him stand up and say so.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: You had a very narrow escape last election.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member says that I had a very narrow escape, and I want to say that of every creed and every nationality in the country there was one party that made all the mischief. The people who stirred up all the mud, visited every German house in my electorate and spoke against the British, and also against members of this party, were members on the other side. I suffered from misrepresentation through members opposite making a personal visit to every house in my electorate. There were German mothers who, as they said at the time, signed, practically speaking, their sons' death warrants when they sent them to the front; and these men over there went into those houses, tried to stir up strife, and tried to influence them against me.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member referred to hon. members on the Government side as "these men." He knows that he is not in order in doing so.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will say "hon. members," Mr. Speaker. I admit that I

had a narrow escape, and that was the reason. There was misrepresentation, and, as I said before, there are worse enemies on the other side than the Germans.

Mr. KIRWAN: Thank you. I knew you would say that.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member for Drayton is not in order in making accusations of that kind. The hon. member is very loose in his language, and I have allowed him a good deal of liberty. He has accused hon. members on my right of treason on fully half a dozen occasions within the last ten minutes, but I am sure the hon. member does not mean it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: As I said before, if we had lost the war and the Germans came here, they would have taken part of our property to pay for the cost of the war; but hon. members opposite make no secret—or their supporters do not—they try to cover it up, but their supporters make no secret of the fact that they would take the lot. If that is so, then they must be worse than our enemies in Germany. Most certainly they must be. One would take half and the other would take the lot. There is a remedy for all these things, and if we were to deal in a common-sense way with the questions of the day and deal with the men as men, things would be all right. The way to fight Bolshevism is to make it unnecessary. There are three services which should be declared neutral, and were practically declared neutral, in connection with industrial matters. They are the railways, the postal service, and the steamship service along the coast. Those three services should be worked under a special charter, and the employees in those services should have every possible means of having their grievances redressed. They should have a position guaranteed, but the right to strike should not be allowed. If a man strikes, and he is responsible for himself only, it is all very well; but we have a railway strike practically at Maryborough because one man got his promotion three months ahead of another, or some such tripe as that. When the whole State suffers, and when women and children are crying for bread, it is about time we had these national highways made neutral; and if we got these men together, it should be quite easy to formulate a scheme whereby the men would be assured of what is right. The other thing is co-operation. If everything is nationalised, the workers must give their life's blood and their work for every vagabond and every rogue in the State, because the State comprises all those people as well as the rich middlemen. The man who works on the State railways or in a State fish shop and makes a big profit, is making it for the man who will not work as well as for the rich man; but under a co-operative system the worker would own his own means of production and receive his full share of all profits.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: John Stuart Mill.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am talking of what has actually been done. The farmers twenty-five years ago had no factories of their own, but now they own over 100 cheese factories and a great many butter factories, and I maintain [7.30 p.m.] that what the farmers have done the workers could do, and then they would get the profits. Mr. John Burns said that,

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if the workers of England spent as much money in machinery for production as they did on drink, they would own the whole of the producing machinery of Great Britain. The strikes in Australia last year cost over £5,000,000. How many factories would that amount put up? The workman has to bring his brains into the co-operative system, and put up his own factories, which is the right thing for him to do.

Mr. GILDAY: It is to his own interest.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is no reason why he should not have the profits, if he takes the same risk as the farmers have done. I am sorry my time has expired, but I will take the opportunity of speaking on this subject on a future occasion.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I think it is to be regretted that hon. members on this side saw fit to interject during the speech of the hon. member for Drayton, because had he been left alone, that hon. member would have exceeded Baron Munchausen as a good performer in exaggeration. It is deplorable that the House has to have inflicted upon it such exaggeration. I think that hon. members on both sides should confine themselves as much as possible to facts, so as not to get into "Hansard" statements which are irrelevant and untrue.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Every one of those statements are true, and you cannot dispute it.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Drayton said that twelve months ago a box of matches cost 6d. in the railway refreshment-rooms. I say that statement is a deliberate falsehood. We have seen statements in the Press from time to time that the slogan of this party is profiteering, but I think it is not only the slogan of this party, but the slogan all over the world to-day. Profiteering has caused a lot of unrest and starvation which exist on the Continent, and which will be caused in Australia, unless some remedy is found to deal with it. We see from the "Courier" that the Government had been charged with spending £7,000,000 more in a stated period than the previous Government. I ask, who received that sum of £7,000,000? It was spent in improving labour conditions, and in the high cost of living, and ultimately it got back into the hands of the profiteers. I think that is the answer to any charges of excess expenditure by this Government as against past expenditure. We have only to take the question of where the profit goes. Take, for example, the Queensland National Bank and the Australian Bank of Commerce, and consider what the depositors got from those banks when they went smash. Huge profits are being made by those banks to-day; and where have they come from? I say the banking institutions are responsible for a good deal of the trouble which exists to-day. We have not heard the hon. member for Drayton speak of the profits which the banks made out of the farmers. The banking institutions, when money is plentiful, ask farmers to borrow, and as soon as hard times come they put the screw on. We never hear anything from the hon. member for Drayton about the charges of the bankers. When the Commonwealth Bank was instituted, it was alleged that it was going to be a good institution for the people; but we find that, although the bank started business under the most favourable auspices at the time the Labour Government were in power, as soon as the Liberal Government got possession of

the bank, the undershoots began to come up from the briar, and the Commonwealth Bank is now the means of other banks making higher profits. We hear about people in the North starving for bread, and no party is more anxious that the people of the North should get bread than the present Government.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRENNAN: I am reminded of the rosy loaf. It looks all right on the outside, but when you cut it all within is rotten, like the arguments of the Opposition. Just look at the members of the Opposition. You can see they are the relics of capitalism, and are very fast fading away. We find that, in America, under the Wells Act, companies are enabled to be formed to operate outside America. Those companies are operating throughout the world, in connection with the meat trust and by-products of the industry. We have them in Australia. The Opposition know they exist here, but they will not try to prevent the capitalistic classes of America from exploiting the people of Australia. They are prepared to allow them to go on making huge profits, because they can bear the high cost of living. So long as that system exists, so long will there be turmoil in Australia, and we should deal promptly with the matter.

I was pleased to see a reference to profiteering in the Governor's Speech, which I think foreshadows some of the greatest legislation which has ever been put before the people of Queensland. I desire to read a quotation from the "Courier" of 11th August. It states—

"Considerable comment has been caused by a Federal Minister's statement that the limited powers of the Constitution prevent the Commonwealth Government interfering in regard to profiteering, and an inquiry to-day elicited the information that the War Precautions Act was a temporary measure, which ceases three months after the official termination of the war. Under it the Commonwealth Government took the power to fix prices, but in the case of *Burvett v. Farey* the High Court held, in effect, that in normal times it could not do so under the present Constitution, which specifies its powers. The court laid it down that only when Federal Ministers considered that it was necessary as a measure in defence of Australia, in relation to the war, could they fix prices. It was for this reason that in 1915 Mr. Hughes urged the people to agree by referendum to alter the Constitution for the purpose of extending the powers of the Commonwealth Government. He then said, in an appeal for support of the referendum, that it was with the utmost difficulty that the bulk of the community were able to make both ends meet; yet many had made, and were still making, great fortunes out of the war. He, therefore, asked the people to give the Government power to so control trade and commerce that it would be able, if the occasion arose, to fix food prices in an effective way. It will be recalled that on account of the war the Government agreed at the eleventh hour to withdraw the referendum. The position to-day is as it was then, so far as the powers of the Commonwealth Government are concerned.

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Under the State Constitutions the same disabilities do not apply."

I say it is a very disastrous thing that in 1910 and earlier years, when the Commonwealth Labour Government asked the people of Australia to alter the Constitution so that trusts and combines might be effectually dealt with, the Opposition and their kindred outside fought it tooth and nail. They said that, if the Labour party were given power to regulate prices or to interfere with trusts and combines, they would soon own a man's toothbrush, and the most malicious lies were circulated. We find that price-fixing regulations cannot be properly made until the Constitution is altered. If the present Federal Government will go in for the alteration of the Constitution, so as to regulate trusts and combines, we shall all be on the same platform advocating the cause they have stolen from us. Our policy is to regulate trusts and combines. We should regulate the meat trust, the sugar combine, the wheat combine, and also the bank combine. The only way effectually to regulate the meat trade of Australia is to control the meatworks. We know that no cattle go out of Australia on the hoof—they go to the meatworks; and once the Commonwealth Government control the meatworks we can regulate prices and supply meat to the people. If the squatter considers his own interests, he will prevent the intrusion of the American meat trusts from hampering him, and will support an alteration of the Constitution to keep those trusts out. He must see it coming himself. He must know very well that at Smithfield, in London, the American beef trust have control. The grazier knows it. We all know it. Why will they not come along and assist this Government and also the Commonwealth Government to bring in legislation for the purpose of regulating, by referendum, combines and monopolies? When that is done it will prove effective. This is the place where all these matters should be regulated. There is no doubt it is difficult for any Government to carry on State meatshops and stations as effectively as a private individual. It was absolutely necessary that this Government should take control. If we can get control of the meatworks we can, as we did during the war, regulate the price of meat to the householder and the labourer. The pastoralists would then have to send their meat through our works. I think that the Government have done wonderful things during the war by regulating the price of meat. The Opposition ought to be pleased and proud of this Government, if they would play the game. I know that recently we had some fish sent up to Toowoomba. It came there at 5.30 a.m. and at 5.45 a.m. most of the people buying it were Liberals.

Mr. VOWLES: Why shouldn't they?

Mr. BRENNAN: It speaks volumes for this Government's enterprise. I am pleased to see that Liberals appreciate and patronise the meatshops, because they know they are getting a fair deal. It shows that the people who are opposing this Government are doing so to please their capitalistic friends. At heart they agree with us. I have seen members of Parliament at the State meatshops in Brisbane. I think it is a fine spirit, and shows they are appreciating the efforts put forward by this Government. The further we go into these matters the

more shall we be appreciated in the hearts of the Opposition. Regarding the sale of meat by the private butchers, I do not think the health authorities pay sufficient attention to the Enoggera yards. On the day of the cattle sales you will find that before the sales they sell what they call "defects"—the lumpies; the cattle which are suffering from tuberculosis and cancer. You find that those cattle are sold and taken away. Ultimately they must find their way into the butchers' shops. I ask the health authorities, or those who are responsible for inspection: Is it a fair thing to allow the grazier to sell these lumpies to the butcher without sufficient inspection at the sale-yards, and to allow the meat to go into the consumers' homes?

Mr. VOWLES: They must be killed under Government supervision.

Mr. BRENNAN: I say they must not be. The Slaughtering Act provides that notice of intention to kill must be sent to the inspector, so that the inspector, if he is able, may get there. We know very well that from time to time cattle are killed, and the inspector never gets there. I think that is a matter that should be seriously gone into by the health authorities in Brisbane. I am very sorry to see the hon. member for Drayton leaving this Chamber, as I am about to speak on farming matters.

Mr. VOWLES: Go out and get him.

Mr. BRENNAN: I wish you would. I would like him to be here, because I think he has done very little in the interests of the farmers during the recess. If we had good seasons, we would not require to listen to so much claptrap from the Opposition. Good seasons would make all the difference. Since this Government came into power we have not had good seasons. We have had the adversity of drought practically all the time. Notwithstanding that, this Government have put on the statute-book legislation which is satisfactory to the farmer. They talk of the land tax. In the land tax we have exemptions for farmers suffering from distress by drought, losses of stock and other circumstances, which are a sufficient warranty to enable the farmer to be relieved of the land tax. Further, if a farmer makes such a profit as entitles him to pay income tax, and his profit is under a certain amount, he is entitled to be credited in his income tax with his land tax. Taking those two facts into consideration, I say that the farmer is very satisfied. In my electorate we have small, industrious farmers who are anxious and willing to learn. They do not complain of the land tax. All that they complain of is having to make out returns. I would like to see the officials in charge of the Taxation Department make the returns more simple, so that the farmer would not have the same inconvenience in making them out. We have on the Downs a very fine belt of country. We have there, I suppose, country which will grow anything that will grow in the world. Immediately we strike a drought, trouble arises. The Agricultural Department should have established in Toowoomba—which is the centre of the Darling Downs, and the place which is most convenient for all sections of the community, and the farmers in particular, to meet—a scientific school to assist and educate the farmers in the method of production. (Hear, hear!) We want a chemical school for farmers on the Downs. We want

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a practical man going round the Downs to educate the farmers in the conservation of fodder. Until the farmer is educated in the conservation of fodder, so long will the trouble arise with each drought such as exists at the present time. (Hear, hear!) We find to-day that the farmer starts off with a farm, has a good season, and is not satisfied unless he buys more cattle than his country is fit to carry. He will buy dairy cows in great numbers, and will not conserve his fodder. Immediately a drought sets in, the feed disappears, the cattle fall in price, the milk goes off, and the farmer strikes hard times. We also want the Agricultural Department to regulate the class of cattle which should be put on the dairy farm. The farmers only want educating in these matters, and they will repay the effort and expense to which the Agricultural Department will be put. Regarding the conservation of fodder, a great deal has been said by the Opposition, by way of interjection, in connection with silos. I have taken a keen interest in this matter, notwithstanding the ridicule which has been hurled at me by the hon. member for Drayton. I think it would be far better for the hon. member to try and think with the farmer, and educate him where he is defective, than to come into this House and talk claptrap for a solid hour without any meaning in it. Practical men from the West, on the Downs, and all over the country have proved that the trench silo is an absolute success. It is economic, and on being instituted will be the means of saving the country from further trouble. So far is it a success that, I understand, the Queensland National Bank are going to put a compulsory clause in their mortgages that a trench silo shall be installed on the land over which the mortgage extends.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What about the advance to lawyers?

Mr. BRENNAN: I am coming to that later on. I do not think there has been any advance made by the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do not mean it.

Mr. BRENNAN: I regret that during the parliamentary recess the hon. member for Drayton did not remain on the Downs and try and assist the farmer. I think he should try and educate himself to assist the farmer to do something for himself. We found that, when the farmers were in the midst of the most severe difficulties, the hon. member for Drayton was away up North, at conferences in the sugar district, and other places. I say his duty was to be in the areas where the crops that he should know something about are grown. The farmers on the Downs need co-operation, and they should also have the co-operation of members of Parliament. I would suggest that the Government should appoint practical men, and allow them to go round the farming districts for the purpose of educating the farmers in the matters I have mentioned.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The farmers know all about them.

Mr. BRENNAN: If the farmers knew all about them, they would be doing something in regard to those matters, but, as a matter of fact, I can tell the hon. member that farmers frequently come to me and ask what they should do.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are pulling your leg.

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Mr. BRENNAN: They are not pulling my leg; they are merely applying to me for information. If the hon. member would deal with something practical in his speeches in the House, instead of talking about farmers pulling my leg, he would do something that would probably be of advantage to the farmer. I think the farmers should be told how the hon. member talks in this House, and how he interjects about pulling one's leg when the subject of the conservation of fodder is under consideration. That kind of talk is scandalous. The hon. member for Fassifern told me that he conserved 2 cwt. of fodder in a pit silo. The hon. member is deeply interested in the farming industry and in the conservation of fodder, but I am sorry to say that the hon. member for Drayton is not. If the hon. member for Fassifern can conserve 2 cwt. of fodder in a pit, then a farmer could conserve half a ton of fodder in a constructed silo, and that would be his salvation, especially if he could be shown that, after the removal of the silo, the ensilage remained intact for a considerable period.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have proved that.

Mr. BRENNAN: That has never been proved. I would like to see the Agricultural Department giving prizes at the Toowoomba show for the best samples of ensilage, and I am sure that, if sufficient encouragement is given them, farmers will do all that is required in this direction. Let me give an example of what can be done by educating the farmer in the right way. The present Government, through my special exertions, supplied seed wheat to farmers this year at 7s. 6d. per bushel on terms, and many farmers in my electorate got wheat at that price. But there were a few who were so bitter against the Government that they would not take the seed wheat from the Government at 7s. 6d. per bushel, but bought the same wheat which had not been applied for at public auction, and paid 11s. 7d. per bushel. The farmers had only to sign the usual document to show what was their position, and it seems to me that the refusal of some farmers to take the wheat offered by the Agricultural Department only shows how far they are prepared to go against the present Government.

Mr. VOWLES: Did the Government sell the wheat through Dalgety and Company?

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, they sold the wheat through Dalgety and Company. We have got a State Produce Agency, and that agency should have sold that wheat. Why the Under Secretary of the Department should go to a capitalistic concern like Dalgety and Company is a matter which should be explained, for it appears to me that the selling of that wheat through Dalgety and Company amounts almost to a scandal.

With regard to the question of leasehold or freehold, there has been a good deal said about the leasehold system by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Murilla said that, if a man took up land under the perpetual lease system, and a paling came off his fence, that paling would never be put back. What is all the objection against the perpetual lease system? A perpetual lease is a lease for ever. But hon. members opposite do not appreciate the benefit it is to the farmer to get a lease under which

he has only to pay a fixed rental. They would prefer that the farmers should have to go to a bank to borrow money for the purpose of stocking their land, instead of using their own capital for that purpose. The Canning Downs land was sold at from 30s. to £4 per acre. The National Mutual Company lent as high as £4 per acre on that land, and the Queensland National Bank later took over the mortgages and lent as high as £7 per acre. A drought came along, and the farmers then found themselves in the position that they had to pay interest on £7 per acre. Would it not have been better for those farmers to have acquired their land under the perpetual lease system than to have to pay interest on £7 per acre?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And their rent will be raised.

Mr. BRENNAN: The rent will not be raised in the way the hon. member suggests.

I am very pleased to see that the Speech foreshadows the introduction of an Unemployed Workers Bill. There seems to be a profit on every industry, but there is no profit on labour. If a man gets sick and is off work for a month, he gets nothing. I contend that the worker should be protected in that respect. We should not say, "A fair day's work for a fair day's pay," but should say, "A fair day's work for a good day's pay." We know what working men have experienced during the recent influenza epidemic, and I would ask: How can the working classes keep their wives and children if they receive no remuneration during the whole time they are sick and unable to work? It is our duty to give every consideration to the worker. It is the worker—and included in the expression is the farmer—coupled with the education system of the present time, who will be the

[8 p.m.] man of the future, and he is the man we must study. We find very often that we put legislation on the statute-book, and that the Executive do their share in seeing that rules and regulations are framed; but I regret to say that the administration is not what it might be. There has been handed down to us, especially in the Railway Department, heads of departments who have no sympathy with this Government, and hence they attempt on every available occasion to create anomalies, unpleasant conditions, strife, and discontent; and I say that they are doing it deliberately, just as Mr. Evans, when he was granted a three years' engagement on the implied understanding, judging by his expressed conduct, that he was to spend as much money as possible so as to put the Labour Government in bad odour for the next three years. And in the case of our Under Secretaries, I think that, as a party, it has only got to be proved that such a state of things exists, that sympathetic administration has not been given to our good legislation, to have the matter rectified. I, for one, will take action if I get the chance. We must have legislation carried out in a sympathetic manner, just as other legislation used to be carried out for the benefit of the capitalistic classes. The conduct of these officials neutralises the benefits of legislation.

The hon. member for Drayton had some very harsh things to say to-night with reference to the German vote. If you only saw him going through his electorate before an election you would not think he was the

same man. He almost wears the hair off his head raising his hat.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Don't you kiss the children?

Mr. BRENNAN: I shake hands, and would kiss children, if necessary. I am not ashamed of what I do; but, should the hon. member come into this House and speak in the way which he does when in his electorate, hon. members would not recognise him as the same man. (Laughter.) He is like the bully who goes home and is beaten by his wife. I was requested to go to Sydney recently and appear before the Board of Inquiry regarding the deportation of interned Germans. A number had married Australian girls, and, notwithstanding my telegram, they refused to give me a chance of explaining the circumstances of some of the girls on the Darling Downs. There was one case of an unnaturalised German painter, living in Toowoomba and working at his trade—he was at large. His wife got a notice asking whether she would go to Germany with her husband, or let him go while she remained behind. According to yesterday's "Daily Mail" we find a very different position in England—

"The Home Office has commenced releasing small parties of Germans from internment subject to police registration and restricted movements."

And they are right at the seat of the trouble, and we are 12,000 miles away. Yet the jingoes outside, friends of hon. members opposite, say, "Deport these men to Germany to become workers to make goods which can be sent to Australia so that we can make huge profits." Members of the Opposition brought those people out here, and they came with the best of intentions. They have worked here and in some cases married Australian girls, and I say that it is a crime to deport them and drop them broadcast in other parts of the world. The authorities should first of all consider what a criminal act they are committing towards these people. The hon. member for Drayton will not raise his voice in support of them—in support of the Australian girls who are going to be sent away. I say it is a shame and a crime.

Hon. members know that we have had great trouble regarding our hospital in Toowoomba. The matter has caused a great deal of interest to the people on the Downs, and a great deal of trouble to me as member for Toowoomba. We have had several committees, and the last one resigned. Four men were prepared to assist in pulling the institution through—all Liberal supporters, who offered their services to work with the Government representatives—but the papers and the people opposed to us in politics saw that the committee was going to be a success and "raised Cain" and caused such a stir that eventually those four men refused to act. A meeting was held at which a man named Gregg said—

"Supposing the new committee accepts it, they would be in a worse position."

Later on, he said—

"I have been gagged before, but I want to say that it will be impossible for the new committee to carry on.

"Voices: Then let them try."

Later on a resolution extending sympathy

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to Mr. Gregg for the causes which brought about their resignations was carried, and Mr. Gregg moved—

“That no election of subscribers’ representatives to the committee be made until the Government makes a base hospital grant to the Toowoomba Hospital.”

The hon. member for East Toowoomba spoke in support of that resolution. He wanted no committee formed at all. He said that for some reason the Government were not prepared to help the hospital, and the patients would not suffer if the terms of the resolution were carried out. The meeting practically broke up, and then the hon. member actually took a seat as subscribers’ representative. Could he have had the best interests of the institution at heart? A meeting was held only a few nights ago to consider sixty odd applications for the post of secretary. It was moved by the hon. member for East Toowoomba, and seconded by Mr. Gregg, that a man named Austin, secretary and organiser of the National Political Association, be made secretary. The unions are giving 1d. in the £1 of their wages, and this was a deep-laid scheme on the part of the hon. member and others to prevent subscriptions coming to the hospital.

Mr. VOWLES: Talk sense.

Mr. BRENNAN: A great friend of the hon. member for East Toowoomba—a man who had worked side by side with him in friendly society matters—was also an applicant, but the hon. member would not even second his nomination. Mr. Austin, the gentleman selected, was a very nice fellow personally, but the effect will be such as to cause damage to the hospital.

Mr. VOWLES: You are trying to bring that effect about.

Mr. BRENNAN: I am not, because I was approached by about twenty persons next morning who told me, “You are a nice man to appoint such a secretary as that, knowing the effect it will have upon the subscriptions.”

I am very pleased to see in the Governor’s Speech mention of a Jury Bill. I think it is a measure which has long been needed in Queensland. Our Jury Act dates back to 1867, and in respect to special cases the qualification of juror is that he shall be one of the following:—

“Esquires, accountants, merchants, brokers, engineers, architects, warehousemen, commission agents.”

The TREASURER: What is an esquire?

Mr. BRENNAN: Esquires to-day are all Tories, because they were created justices of the peace by Liberal Governments—there are very few Labour justices of the peace. I am very pleased to see that the second leader of the High Court, Mr. Justice Isaacs, in the case of the Premier of Queensland against the Melbourne “Argus,” used these words on the question of a common jury against a civil jury—

“After hearing counsel, the judge remarked that the less he went into detail the better, but, taking a broad view of the case, he thought it included matters which affected the whole community, and therefore the jury should be as representative of the community as the law would permit. A special jury would diminish its representative character by

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excluding the greater proportion of possible jurors. On the other hand, the plaintiff’s request would embrace all classes, excluding none, and he thought the fair order in the case would be for a jury of twelve common jurors.”

When we have a High Court judge speaking in that strain, I think it is time that the civil jury, as constituted at present under the Queensland Jury Act, should be abolished, and I suggest, as an alternative, that we should have a jury consisting of two men as arbitrators, one to be appointed by either side. The appointment of arbitrators will not mean the appointment of two partisans, because no solicitor would appoint a partisan on a case knowing that he would be headstrong and unwilling to effect a compromise in the interests of his client. He would therefore appoint a practical man, and the two would arbitrate and compromise on certain points, and, if they could not agree, then the judge would decide. Why is it that, under the present Jury Act, one side only has the right to ask for a jury; and why is it that, in a particular case, no jury is required at all? The reason is this: One side may have a bad case, and may wish to get a jury to try and get the sympathy of the jury against the law and against the merits of the case in order to get damages. Then, where you have a jury you may have a democratic client, and you may have a conservative jury, and under those circumstances the democratic client will not get a fair deal. We know that the chambers of commerce, traders’ associations, and other associations complain bitterly of sixteen of their representatives being brought down to the Supreme Court and kept hanging about from day to day; we know that that is a great inconvenience to those men. They want an alteration of trial by jury in civil cases. We want it, and the High Court wants it, and therefore why cannot we alter the jury system? Why cannot we bring in a Bill that the present jury system be discontinued and that each side shall have the right to appoint an arbitrator? That would have the effect of shortening litigation and cheapening it. I will refer now to the experience I had recently on visiting a certain centre on the Downs to conduct a case on behalf of a client. The client on the one side had a claim against another person for defamation. The defamation consisted of certain words accusing a member of a shire council of making a profit. The words alleged in the plaint, which were subsequently proved—at least, they were in writing—made it look as though this person had been paid for his services.

Mr. VOWLES: Not at all—accepted a bribe.

Mr. BRENNAN: And, further, a letter which was sent to the Home Secretary’s office, by way of comment, said it would look as though this councillor accepted a bribe. The defendant was a stock dealer in not very good circumstances, and the plaintiff was a shire councillor in a big way. The plaintiff was a man who got into the shire council and bought a piece of land for £16, and he got from that shire council of which he was a member the sum of £120 for that piece of land.

Mr. VOWLES: Why did he get it?

Mr. BRENNAN: He got it because he said there was a quarry there, but the quarry was not there. I say that, if a councillor purchased a piece of land for £16 and sold

it to his own council for £120, such a transaction should be the subject of public criticism, and such was the feeling in Chinchilla over the matter that one councillor named Jenner was defeated by the greatest majority by which any councillor had ever before been defeated for the division. He was defeated by forty-eight votes in the No. 1 division of the Chinchilla shire where this deal happened, and because this man wrote a letter which made it look as though he was paid for his services and had accepted a bribe, a jury consisting of station managers, squatters, and warehousemen gave the full £200 damages against him.

Mr. VOWLES: Do you say it was true?

Mr. BRENNAN: I say it looked as though Evans, the plaintiff, was guilty of corruption, because he paid £16 for the land and received £120 for it. The defendant in that case wrote to the Home Secretary—which letter was read in court—that the council of Chinchilla consisted of the Tory element. The jury were the same, and being represented by a Labour solicitor, what chance did he have? Further, I would refer to the hon. member for Murrumbidgee and the case against him the other day. He attacked the moral character of a man, and said he ought to be in gaol, and the special jury only gave £25 against him.

Mr. WARREN: Yes, and £25 too much.

Mr. BRENNAN: If a man attacks the moral character of another man, and says he ought to be in gaol, and then only £25 damages are given against him, why should this person at Chinchilla have to pay £200 damages for saying that another man, under the circumstances related, accepted a bribe? At the same District Court in Dalby a case was tried, where a squatter allowed 150 head of bullocks to trespass on a poor farmer who had maize growing, and who had certain grasses growing of the value of £400. The squatter allowed the bullocks to trespass for a period of five weeks, and the 150 bullocks ate him out; there was a drought prevailing, and the farmer had the best crop in the district, and the same class of jury only gave the poor farmer £60 damages.

Mr. VOWLES: And he reckoned he got too much. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: I am showing the disparity in damages given by juries in such cases. I am not saying that the jury in the Evans case might not have given him a verdict. They might have given him a verdict, but I am showing the unfair way in which they treated him by the damages awarded.

Then, again, we want legal reform. We know very well that we have in Queensland at the present time a system which has prevailed practically from the time of Magna Charta. Shakespeare wrote of the "law's delays." We know very well that the system of pleading is so cumbersome that people will not test litigation, knowing that they cannot afford, even if they are successful, to carry on such a luxury. If you issue a writ, there has to be a reply. The statement of claim has to be sent, and a statement of defence in reply; and, if the defendant has a counter claim, he issues his statement of defence and the counter claim. Then there is joinder of issue, notice of trial, and then the trial on the top of it all. Why should we have all that inconvenience in the form of pleadings? All these pleadings could be done away with, and they

should be done away with in order to cheapen litigation. That in itself would cheapen litigation.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: They should nationalise the lawyers.

Mr. BRENNAN: I think they should nationalise them for this reason: In 1881 we had a Bill passed called the Legal Practitioners Act, which provides—

"1. From and after the passing of this Act notwithstanding any statute or rule or order or practice or regulation of court to the contrary every person now practising or who may hereafter be admitted to practise as a barrister in the Supreme Court may also practise as a solicitor and every solicitor heretofore admitted or who shall hereafter be duly admitted may practise also as a barrister."

That is the law. I am entitled to go into the Supreme Court as a barrister or a solicitor. I have no fear with regard to the Supreme Circuit Court in Toowoomba; I get every consideration from the judges. But the bar combine in Brisbane is so great that a solicitor of Brisbane dare not go into the Supreme Court. Mr. Justice Chubb the other day is reported to have said—

"This is simply ridiculous. At sittings after sittings of the court we are told that the witnesses are up the country. I'm going to try a case to-day."

He points out how ridiculous the whole system is.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Not for the client.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is very unjust for the client. I have known cases where witnesses have been kept waiting seven or eight days, and that breaks the client who wins the case. We should get rid of the wig in the Supreme Court, and let solicitors appear to conduct cases. It is the only profession in the world where a person cannot work for you without going through an intermediate channel. A barrister cannot be seen except by way of double fees through a solicitor. The practice should be discontinued. The next thing we should discontinue are the fixed sittings. We have four sittings a year. There may be twenty cases on the list. You may receive a telegram to bring your witnesses down one morning, and you may have to wait three weeks before the case comes on. Cases should be set down, as they are in the Small Debts Court at the present time, by arrangement. You will thus have litigation cheapened. The abolition of the jury system would also assist in cheapening litigation. There are no wigs in America, and I understand there are no wigs in the Equity Court in Sydney. I notice that on the Supreme Court bench in Brisbane the judges remove their wigs in hot weather. I am sure they would welcome the discontinuance of the wig, and that would confer a great benefit on the community. After all, the courts of justice do not exist for the litigants only; they should be there for those who want them for their own requirements to contest the case. These matters to which I have referred should be brought into effect as soon as possible.

We should also increase the jurisdiction of the Small Debts Court to £150. A number of cases could be conveniently heard

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before a magistrate which he has no jurisdiction to hear at present. We find an Act on the statute-book which we do not seem to think much about; it has been smothered up. It is called the Commercial Causes Act of 1910. It was placed on the statute-book for the benefit of merchants; the costs of an action were not to exceed fifty guineas; and the judge was empowered to make such orders and give such directions as in his opinion were expedient, and thus bring about an inexpensive determination of the matter at issue between the parties. Pleadings were dispensed with. If these things can be done for the capitalist and the trader, surely they should be made to apply generally. It would be far better for the legal profession to have the court procedure simplified so that people could have their issues tried and not have to submit to the present delay and expense. Serious attention should be given to these improvements for which the country has been crying out for a considerable period. I am very pleased to have received such a patient hearing from hon. members. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): This is the first occasion I have been privileged to hear a full-dress debate on the Address in Reply, and I wonder how long the people of Queensland, whom my friends opposite claim to represent, are going to tolerate this shocking waste of time.

Mr. KIRWAN: You sit down and let the question go. Don't waste time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is a pity that the time of so many members should be taken up in this way. However, so long as the privilege exists, I am going to take full advantage of it. (Hear! hear! and laughter.) I should like to refer to the speech of the hon. member for Wide Bay. I was impressed by a few of the remarks which he made concerning the Peace Conference. The hon. member expressed great regret at the result of that conference. He expressed regret, which was generally shared by hon. members opposite, that war was still possible, and also regret that the deliberations of the Peace Conference had been held behind closed doors. Has not war been the means of settling national disputes for thousands of years; and is not human nature still the controlling factor in the world to-day? Is not nature's inexorable law the survival of the fittest?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: When two human beings are in dispute with one another, as soon as the veneer of civilisation is cut through, do they not immediately start with fisticuffs to settle the argument? It is not so many months ago that an hon. member occupying one of the seats opposite to me engaged in very stern warfare with a returned soldier in Edward street. There was no arbitration about that. (Opposition laughter.) It was a question as to which of them had the most powerful punch. (Laughter.) That is exactly the position amongst human beings and nations to-day all the world through. What I want to say is, that hon. members opposite are trying to introduce impracticable ideals in regard to the conduct and settlement of disputes. What is this League of Nations, the practical results of which they express so much doubt about, if it is not arbitration? What does it mean if it is not a glorified arbitration court, by

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which the disputes between nations can be determined? Who are these gentlemen who are pleading the cause of this League of Nations, which I, for one, would dearly like to see established? Are these gentlemen sincere in their complaint that the League of Nations is not going to accomplish what is hoped for? What is arbitration doing for Queensland to-day? Has not Queensland been for four years under the control of a Labour Government, whose one aim and ambition has been to see arbitration courts established to settle industrial disputes? I am not saying

the Arbitration Court at the [3.30 p.m.] present moment is perfect. I do not believe it is. But you are complaining about the League of Nations, which is a glorified arbitration court. Instead of endeavouring to introduce what I consider to be an impracticable system of settling national disputes, let us listen to the advice of men like General White and Lord Jellicoe, whom I, and several hon. members I see opposite to me, had the pleasure of listening to a few weeks ago, when they said that Australia's future depended on her preparation for the inevitable. Several hon. members in this House applauded those speeches, and they must have known they were listening to the words of men who knew what they were talking about. How long is an enemy, with his covetous eyes upon Australia, going to wait for a decision of the League of Nations to be given? By the time the League of Nations is appealed to, you will have invasion in the midst of you before you have time to turn round. I believe in the principle of being prepared. Peace can be kept within the shores of Australia only for so long as we are prepared to defend those shores. If we are not prepared to defend our country, the common dictates of nature suggest, and almost make it imperative, that this country will be invaded sooner or later.

Mr. KIRWAN: Then the last war was not the last war, after all?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have never contended that the last war was the last war.

Mr. KIRWAN: We were told that it was.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do not speak in paradoxes. I have never contended that this would be the last war. It is probably the last war which will take place during the present generation; but that war is coming again is sure. I want to refer to the statement which the hon. member for Wide Bay made when he complained of the fact that this Peace Conference was held behind closed doors. I would like to ask the hon. member, was not the Perth Conference held behind closed doors?

Mr. KIRWAN: And the National Political Council conference?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Certainly the Peace Conference was held behind closed doors. The public were not invited in to hear the discussions which were held to determine this war. Was the Australian Labour conference held behind closed doors or not? Is not the hon. gentleman's own caucus held behind closed doors, or are we all invited to come in and enjoy the fun that goes on? (Laughter.) Let the hon. member be consistent. I would also ask what were these refusals during the past day or two to table certain particulars that were asked for by this side of the House? Were they anything else but secrecy? The whole system is

secret, and hon. members opposite know perfectly well that in complaining that the Peace Conference was not held in the open they were inconsistent and insincere.

The ACTING PREMIER: How are your caucuses held?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: In exactly the same way as yours. (Laughter). I very much enjoyed listening to the speech of the hon. member for Logan. I was particularly impressed with his remark that his experiences abroad had altered his views in many respects. I do not want to misquote the hon. gentleman, but I think that was the purport of what he said.

Mr. JAMES: "Broadened," I think I said.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Well, that is all the better. My only regret is that other hon. gentlemen who occupy Government seats, who travel abroad at the Governments expense, do not allow the same breadth of vision to enter into their outlook as has evidently been experienced by the hon. member for Logan. I appreciated his admission that his experiences abroad have had that effect. If other hon. gentlemen occupying Government benches had been privileged to have the experiences that the hon. member for Logan and others have had, possibly they would see that they are doing many things which are contrary to the world's judgment and the world's experience. I contend that this should be a House, not of dangerous dreamers, but of honest, practical reformers. (Hear, hear!). That is the conviction that sometimes causes me to support the contentions of hon. gentlemen opposite, because we want practical reform. You cannot conduct a State like this, which relies upon its industrial activities to meet its obligations, by a combination of dangerous creeds. That is how I contend many of our mistakes are made.

I just want to refer to a few statements made by one of our Ministers in his recent trip abroad, not with any idea of slinging mud—because that is not one of my propensities—but to show how mistakes are made, and how people are misled by the irresponsible statements of hon. members who ought to know better. In an interview which one of our Ministers had with the London "Daily News," and which appears in the issue of that paper for the 16th April last, there is this statement—

"There seems every reason to believe that the enterprise in coal will be as successful at that in meat."

It is only a few weeks since that statement was made, and the people were led to believe that Queensland, in its State control of mines, had found the solution of all coal difficulties. Just a few weeks afterwards, we find a statement appearing in the Press that the only State coalmine which is actually in operation in Queensland has closed down. It has produced 4,513 tons of coal, which was sold to the Railway Department for £2,646—a very fine business. The cost of production was £6,224, showing a net loss in eleven months of £3,540.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What does that prove?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It proves that either the Minister did not know what he was talking about or he was not fit for the

responsibility which was thrown on his shoulders. That information was given to the people of Great Britain to show them what Queensland is doing as a State enterprise in the production of coal. I am not running down State enterprises. That is not my argument. It is this deception that goes on in regard to what Queensland is doing and is capable of doing. Queensland is a good enough country to tell the truth about it. There is no need to tell lies about it. For people in responsible positions to make utterances of this description reflects discredit on all of us who are connected with the country. Another statement was made about the State sawmills. This is what the hon. gentleman said—

"As to timber, the report frankly admits that the product was sold too cheaply, but this has now been altered. The position, however, is in happy contrast to that which obtained before the State sawmills were established, for in the old days high prices were the rule."

Now, what is the inference from that remark? It clearly says that the State entering into the sawmill business had the effect of reducing the price of timber. That is absolutely incorrect. The position is this: In October, 1914, the price of pine was 17s. per 100 superficial feet, and in August, 1918, the price for pine was 32s. per 100 superficial feet—nearly double.

The ACTING PREMIER: Why go back to August, 1914? That is a year before the State sawmills were established. You are trying to deceive the House.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have no desire to deceive the House. I will give the other figures in a minute. Hardwood was 22s 6d. per 100 superficial feet in October, 1914, and in August, 1918, it was 34s. The Acting Premier thinks I am trying to deceive the House. I will give him the figures for January, 1915. The price of pine then was 18s. 6d.

The ACTING PREMIER: That was nine months before the State sawmill was established.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Very well. In April, 1916, the price of pine was 20s. per 100 superficial feet, and in August, 1918, it was 32s. per 100 superficial feet. Hardwood was 24s. in April, 1916, and 34s. in August, 1918.

Mr. POLLOCK: Is that the average price?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: These are the actual published prices.

Mr. JAMES: They vary according to the size of the timber.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are deliberately attempting to mislead this House.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is the actual position with regard to the sawmill business. With regard to coastal shipping, this is what the same gentleman repeats in his interview—

"Private enterprise had failed even to attempt grappling with a pressing national emergency. Fuel could not be obtained to work the copper mines, important as they were in the war. Apparently, more money could be earned by private enterprise by using its boats on some other part of the Australian coast. The Queensland Government thereupon entered into ship management, and

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secured regular supplies of fuel for its smelting works and for the Northern State Railways."

Now, the actual facts with regard to shipping, which hon. gentlemen opposite ought to know all about, are these: that the companies had been handicapped ever since the outbreak of war by the fact of their main ships having been taken off the runs. The boats are run at the same rates at the present moment as those at which they were run before the war. And that is another fact which hon. gentlemen opposite seem to forget. Further than that, the Government had no smelting works to which this reference is made.

We have heard a great deal about the enormous profits which shipping companies have made on the coast. I am not the least in sympathy with profiteering, or with high charges which are not justified being passed on to the public, but I do object to statements like that being made in the old country, as they bring the whole State of Queensland into discredit. The hon. member for Wide Bay made reference to the cost of timber, and complained very seriously of the prices of timber being increased throughout the State of Queensland. I would just call the attention of that hon. member to the fact that the cost of pine logs on trucks in Brisbane at the present moment is something like 18s. 6d. per 100 superficial feet, as against 5s. 6d. per 100 superficial feet a few years ago, and the reason for that, as the Secretary for Public Lands knows only too well, is the increased royalties charged on timber by the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is absolutely untrue.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is not absolutely untrue. The fact is as I have stated it to the House.

I wish now to refer to some of the criticism which hon. members opposite have indulged in with reference to the action of the Federal Government. It seems to me that their reason for talking Federal politics is, firstly, because of the proximity of the Federal elections, and, secondly, to divert attention from the shortcomings of the Government which are exemplified in Queensland to-day. If members opposite will take a little advice from me on this subject, I will give it them. If those gentlemen will only wait until the Ministers in charge of Federal politics are able to speak and give the facts, which are at present unknown to us, I think it will be found that a great deal of the criticism which has been launched against the Federal Government has no real foundation. I myself have been very wroth with the Federal Government on more than one occasion for what seemed to me their inactivity in connection with certain public affairs; but, all the same, I hold that it is wise for all of us to refrain from criticising them until we are actually in possession of facts which none of us know at the present time.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The Prime Minister is going to grab the Labour platform when he comes back.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If he does, let me remind the hon. member "That imitation is the sincerest form of flattery." A great deal has been said during the course of this debate about the seamen's strike, and I should like to make a brief reference

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to it. My view of the situation is that it is not a question as to the merits or demerits of the complaint made by the seamen. Personally, I think that every right-thinking man who is imbued with humane instincts must admit that many of their complaints are completely justified.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: Especially regarding the accommodation.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I agree with that; but I say that it is not a question as to whether their complaints are right or wrong, but a question as to how the remedies for those complaints are to be applied. Are they to be applied at the point of the pistol, or are they to be applied by the constitutional authority by law established? The President of the Federal Arbitration Court has stated that he can deal with the problem, and will deal with it when he is approached in the proper way; and I am certain that the Commonwealth Government are as anxious to see this matter disposed of as any right-thinking man in this Assembly is. I am sure that, if the men on strike would only adopt constitutional means to have their grievances redressed, they would have them speedily adjusted. I have listened to comments by hon. gentlemen occupying the opposite benches regarding the refusal of the Commonwealth Government to supply ships to the Queensland Government for the purpose of carrying food to the people in the North. I am not going to enter into the merits or demerits of that controversy, but I ask: Are hon. members sincere, are they fair, or are they just in making such statements as they have made when the Government have a chartered steamer lying idle at the wharf not many yards away from where we are at the present moment because the seamen disagree with the chief steward? That vessel, chartered by the Government, is hung up in spite of the starvation of people in the North because the crew disagree with the views or the personality of the chief steward. That shows the insincerity of hon. members opposite in the remarks they have made on this subject.

At fifteen minutes to 9 o'clock p.m.,

THE CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Bertram) took the chair as Deputy Speaker.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I should like to believe that hon. gentlemen opposite are sincere in this matter, but I ask: Why should they direct attention to the action of the Federal Government when the Government of this State have a boat lying at their own wharf, under their own control, and cannot despatch it to the North because of the refusal of unionists to man it?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: They have no control over the crew, and you know it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. member for Normanby made some reference to the delay shown by the Federal Government in engaging on their shipbuilding programme in the South. Does not the hon. member know that for months, and almost years, the Commonwealth authorities were striving to have adopted the system of piecework, which is inseparable from the construction of ships? Does he not also know that for months the negotiations in regard to that matter were retarded because one union would not agree with the system of piecework which was accepted by all the other unions?

Mr. KIRWAN: Did you see what the Melbourne "Age" said?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is really quite pathetic to see the great trust and confidence the hon. member for Brisbane places in the Melbourne "Age." Another point is that it is not so very long since the officer in charge of those shipbuilding yards in the South had to resort to a lockout, if I remember correctly, because of the tremendous slowing down of the riveting in connection with those Commonwealth boats, and it was so transparent that the men immediately amended their ways, and I believe I am right in saying that the rate of riveting was increased three or four times. These are facts to which hon. members opposite neglect to refer, but they are things to which it is necessary to call attention. The hon. member for Normanby said he was looking forward to the time when the unions would control their own industries. In my opinion, that is a development which should be encouraged with all the powers we possess.

Mr. KIRWAN: Do you agree with that?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This is what I agree with—I want to make myself quite clear—by all means let the unions run their own industries. I want to see the unions running their own undertakings, and if the unions poured into the Savings Bank the money that they at present pour into the coffers of the public houses, they would be in a position very speedily to establish their own industries and put to the test all those ideals which hon. members opposite are voicing, and thus prove by experience how impracticable most of those theories are. I would like to encourage the unionists to have their own sheep runs and cattle stations, to have their own bootshops, to have everything which goes to make up the business of the present day. Good luck to them, because once they get responsibility they will cease to be wild in their utterances, just as hon. members opposite have ceased to be wild in their utterances when responsibility is cast upon them. That is what is needed to teach these men the proper way in which business should be conducted. But, I ask, what encouragement is there for experiments in that direction when we have the example of our State-owned railways so disastrously conducted by some of those same unions and their representatives? What is the result? Financial chaos! And if Queensland were not capable of wonderful recoveries, those Queensland railways would run us into the Bankruptcy Court before we knew where we were. My advice is—by all means let them engage in their own industries, but, first of all, let them demonstrate their ability by showing some business enterprise or acumen in the conduct of the Queensland railways. I would like to call attention to the experience of Sir Lyndel Macassey, who was engaged during the war in organising and administering labour in various capacities for the British Government. His way of confuting unsound theories was to give the fairest opportunity of putting their claims into practice.

Mr. KIRWAN: A very good idea.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: An excellent idea. There was one district where the workers demanded that the Government should appropriate the owners and hand over the works to be run by the workers. Sir Lyndel Macassey, instead of questioning the proposal, said, "We will give it a trial."

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Business was adjourned for a week to allow the agitators time and a genuine opportunity to prepare a considered project. The result was ultimately that the general body of workers, who kept a main eye on the security of their own interests, decided to put up with the existing state of things rather than venture on a new uncharted course.

Then he gives other illustrations. But the purport of the whole matter is that as soon as these schemes are put into practical operation they are found to be unsound. But I do encourage the idea that sincere unionists—and there are many who are sincere—should endeavour to put into practical operation such schemes and test them by experience rather than allow the country to drift into bankruptcy as at present. The hon. member for Brisbane has frequently in this debate referred to the Liverpool riots. He has called attention to the bloodshed and the disorder there at the present moment, and he evidently gets a certain amount of solace and comfort from the fact that things are happening in Great Britain as bad as those that are happening in Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: A great deal worse.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Since I have been in this House I have been privileged to listen to a great many utterances from hon. members opposite which have as their purport that the State of Queensland is leading the world in industrial legislation. And it has been repeated so frequently that I was beginning to believe it. But I have found that Queensland is in exactly the same position as other parts of the world, or probably in a worse position. In spite of this proclaimed ability of the Labour Government to govern—which is exemplified rather in the breach than in the performance—and in spite of the fact that we have been leading in social legislation for years, we are now in the throes of the same industrial chaos as other parts of the world.

Mr. KIRWAN: You remember what you said, in commencing, about human nature?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I shall try to remember. In the Speech reference is made to returned men, and I think that all of us, without exception, are of opinion that one of our first duties is to them. But it is unfortunate that reference is made immediately afterwards to the fact that Government endeavour to do the right thing by the returned men is spoiled by the profiteer who is in our midst at the present moment. That is another example of what I call camouflage. They know perfectly well that we are not prevented from doing our duty to returned soldiers by profiteering. They know that that is only one quite insignificant reason why the soldiers' opportunities are being interfered with, and to lay the blame entirely at the door of the profiteer is another evidence of that insincerity which, unfortunately, finds a place in this House.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You have not proved the incorrectness of the statement made in the Speech.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am one of those who believe, and I have never ceased to state it, that the profiteering which is going on is most damnable. There are numerous

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instances of profiteering in our midst, and when the Bill comes forward dealing with the question, I shall do all I can to assist the Government to frame a measure which will be reasonable and applicable to the present position. I consider—I

[9 p.m.] wish to make myself quite clear—that the profiteer is almost as big a curse as the agitating parasite who lives and thrives on Labour's misfortunes. There are curses on both sides. There is the profiteer who makes our task difficult, because we are sincere in our efforts, and there is the parasite who makes the task of hon. members opposite very difficult. Consequently, I unhesitatingly say that the profiteer is just as big an encumbrance to us as the parasitic agitator is to my hon. friends opposite.

The ACTING PREMIER: You will be paraded before the next caucus if you are not careful.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the truth were known, I think it could be clearly proved that the profiteer is far more interested in the present Government maintaining office than he is in this party getting the reins of Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: The "Courier" does not say so.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You have just said that the "Courier" is the worst enemy that this side has, which adds force to my argument. The real solution in connection with all these matters is in the doctrine of production. I remember an utterance made by the Premier when he came back from the old country recently, in which he pointed out that production was the salvation of Queensland; pointed out how the United States, by a programme of production and development, was able to face the most difficult crisis in its history; and pointed out that production in Queensland was the solution of our trouble. We on this side have never ceased to preach the doctrine of production. We have endeavoured to point out that, from the financial point of view, the employment point of view, and the soldiers' point of view, there is only one doctrine which we have to practise here, and that is the doctrine of production. Hon. members opposite, I believe, are sincere in their advocacy of that policy; but, unfortunately, on many occasions, they have to eat their own words, which is a most unhappy process to have to be subjected to. These hon. members opposite know perfectly well that production is necessary, but they have said so many things in the past that make it difficult for them to go outside and plead that course that they are almost run to a standstill. I will endeavour to contrast the two methods by which we propose to deal with the situation—the National—and when I say National, I mean the true National—and the Labour method of dealing with the question of production. The National policy is to add to the wealth of the community. That is what we always contend.

Mr. KIRWAN: What is the policy of the National Democratic Union?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The National Democratic Union does not exist. I thought the hon. member was better informed than that.

Mr. KIRWAN: I am afraid it does.

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Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The policy of the National party is to add to the wealth of the community, and, if I understand the policy of the extremists, it is to distribute the wealth of those who already have it. Now, that is the difference. The extreme section of the Labour party contend that there is enough wealth in Australia to go round, and they say, "Let us set about distributing it amongst us." But we contend that there is far more wealth in the bowels of Australia than we have yet dreamed of. Let us set about getting it and distributing it; but do not retard production by distributing the wealth that exists to-day. Let us create new wealth by active production. That appears to me to define the position. I honestly believe hon. members opposite are in sympathy with our objective in that regard, and it is simply, perhaps, a difference of opinion as to how we are going to arrive at it. I look upon this session of Parliament as being one of vital importance, because on how we conduct ourselves, and how we carry out our legislation during the next five or six months, in my judgment, depends the future of this State of Queensland. I want to point out to some hon. members a misconception that exists regarding this purported wealth which rests in the banking accounts of the capitalists of Australia. I want to point out to them that, if all incomes of £500 and upwards—I start at £500, as that is the minimum wage of politicians—

Mr. KIRWAN: It should be, at any rate.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I start at £500, and I want to point out that, if all incomes of £500 and upwards were divided, it would be equal to 3s. 7d. per head of the population of Australia per week. Is that going to carry the industrial section of the community into that realm of bliss which some hon. members opposite think it will? If all the incomes of Australia of £500 and upwards were divided amongst the population of Australia, it means 3s. 7d. per head of the population per week. That is what you are striving to do—to seize that, and at the same time wreck production, wreck Australia, and wreck everything that we hold dear.

Mr. MULLAN: Where did you get that information? Give us some proof.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I will give proof with pleasure. I will put my information into the hon. member's hands as soon as he likes to ask for it. I could quote statistics in support of my statement.

Mr. MULLAN: Give us all the extracts you like.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Another point is this: Karl Marx—and the Karl Marx school claims a great many students amongst hon. members opposite—has stated that the wealth of the world stolen from the workers is equal to 75 per cent. or 80 per cent. of the total income of the world. I want to apply this argument to Australia, and to point out that in Australia only 19 per cent. of the national income goes to persons in receipt of more than £500 per annum, while 81 per cent. of the national income of Australia goes to people in receipt of less than £500 per annum.

Mr. KIRWAN: What is the average?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You can easily arrive at that by finding out the number of people who are in receipt of incomes of £500 and over, and dividing it amongst them. I admit that I have not come prepared to answer that question. We shall later have opportunities of dealing with many problems which are associated with the industrial position in Queensland to-day, which I do not propose touching upon now because they would take up too much time. I certainly agree with the arguments of a good many hon. members opposite when they say that the Arbitration Court is largely responsible, or its imperfections are largely responsible, for a great deal of the unrest which exists to-day, and I do admit that the Arbitration Court has to be improved in many regards. I contend that, while the working man who goes to the Arbitration Court and gets an award, we will say of £3 5s. a week, based upon the cost of living at that particular time, and before the ink on the award is dry has to face an increase of 2s. 6d. to 5s. a pair in boots; and has to face an increase of so much per lb. in the price of foodstuffs—while that state of affairs exists, and while we do nothing to prevent it, you will always have industrial unrest. There is no gainsaying that, and I cannot see why men who are called upon to face the problems of to-day cannot put their heads together and devise some method of meeting the situation and overcoming the difficulty, because until we do get industrial peace—until the worker has some kind of interest and happiness established in his life—so long will we go on from hand to mouth as we are doing at the present time. I think we all look for the time when we can go about our business without fear of the disruption which at present exists. Nothing is to be gained by members on this side blaming the worker, any more than the position is going to be helped by hon. members opposite continually pointing the finger of scorn at the capitalists and employers. So long as we speak of class consciousness, and pit the employer against the employee, so long will this present state of unhappiness exist. At a later stage I mean to enter fully into the discussion of how we can help to alter these conditions in such a way that we can set about the problem of resuscitating our finances, and putting Queensland on a proper footing, and of doing out duty to the returned men and the State at large. To talk about introducing measures to relieve unemployment is an unthinkable proposition to men who study the position. If there is unemployment, it is evidence of misgovernment. Here is a country brimful of natural resources, and full of commodities which the world is hungering for. We are a little handful of people, who cannot possibly extract one-hundredth part of the wealth which Queensland contains, talking about relief for unemployment. I contend that the introduction of a Right to Work Bill or an Unemployment Bill is an insult to the common sense of Queensland legislators. We have got all the means of livelihood at our doors, and all we can do is to look round for some artificial means of giving a man something to do. Let us hope that by an interchange of opinions we shall arrive at some solution of the difficulty which will deprive us of the necessity of sinking our pride in introducing a measure which is going to deal forcefully with the question of unemployment.

I would like to touch upon the question of finance. It has been claimed that Labour's weakest point is going to be in finance. I consider that the finances of this Government are in as capable hands as that party could find when they are in those of the present Treasurer, but I do not think it is possible for practical finance to be coupled with the impracticable legislation which has been introduced since this Government came into power. You have started with impossible ideals and tried to make your income meet the situation. You have increased that income since you came into office by more than £2,000,000 per annum, and still you find you are £172,000 in arrears. Every year there is more income, and every year a deficit. Every year you are chasing the shadow. You are trying to finance impossible propositions. Therefore, I contend that the argument is pretty sound when it is said that Labour Governments are bad financiers. They try their best, but they come up against the inevitable end—big deficits. Up to 30th June last year we had enjoyed the extraordinary and unprecedented revenue for Queensland of £9,500,000. That is extracted from a little handful of people, probably not representing the size of a medium-sized town in Great Britain. Yet, with that revenue of £9,500,000 there is a deficit of £172,000. The revenue is nearly double what it was ten years ago. Queensland is getting twice as much revenue as it got ten years ago, and my object in calling attention to this is not that I am a believer in deficits being detrimental to a country, an institution, or a State-owned enterprise—there are legitimate reasons for deficits—but I am beginning to be very fearful of the present financial position. We are drifting into the position of becoming almost insolvent. In Labour's first year 19 per cent. of the revenue was obtained from direct taxation. For the year just closed no less than 29 per cent. was received from direct taxation.

The TREASURER: You do not believe in direct taxation.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I certainly believe in direct taxation; but if direct taxation is going to be levied upon the people who provide the industries of the Commonwealth in the increasing manner in which it is being imposed at the present time, it is going to have the effect of putting a brake upon production and the development of industry. If we were independent, and did not care whether our industries were developed or not, it would be a different matter; but when, on the other hand, you wish to increase production, and at the same time tax almost to oblivion the men who are needed to increase production, you are killing the goose which lays the golden egg. I want to refer to the fact that the reasons which the Labour Government give as the cause of these deficits which are continually recurring are, one of them, the new card which they have to play for the first time—influenza; the second card is the returned soldiers, and the third card is bad seasons. What comfort hon. gentlemen opposite get from looking to these causes to explain away the present huge expenditure I fail to see. The actual reason is inefficiency. At the present

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time our Government institutions and State-owned departments are suffering from a serious epidemic of inefficiency.

The TREASURER: I think there is no more inefficiency than there was at the Darra cement works.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I agree with that contention. The same inefficiency which has displayed itself in our Government departments is also exemplified in the Darra cement works.

Mr. STOPFORD: It is very badly designed and in a bad location.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am only sorry that I had not then the pleasure of knowing the hon. member for Mount Morgan, as his assistance would have been valuable to me on that occasion. The reason for a great deal of the deficits to-day is inefficiency in Government departments, which is brought about largely by overstaffing. In my opinion, the perpetuation of the system of day labour is costing the Government hundreds of thousands of pounds. When we have roving commissions wandering round the country, presided over by the hon. member for Mount Morgan, who has just given me his views on cement-making and how to do it—

Mr. STOPFORD: How not to do it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: When we have hon. gentlemen drawing hundreds of pounds a year investigating railways which are not required, and making recommendations regarding proposals which we shall never need, then so long shall we have heavy deficits. I also contend that the unwise handling of relief is occasioning a great amount of expenditure that could be avoided.

The ACTING PREMIER: You would starve the distressed persons.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I thought we would get that. I am sorry the Acting Premier did not include the orphans and widows, and make his utterance complete. So long as our hon. friends opposite laugh and joke at what are really the actual reasons for deficiencies, and try to put the blame upon passing epidemics, returned soldiers, and bad seasons, so long will we have deficiencies, and so long will they exemplify their inability to manage the financial affairs of this country—which is almost typical of Labour Governments.

The ACTING PREMIER: What would you cut down the relief to? How much would you give?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I would like, in the few minutes left to me, to make a few remarks concerning railway administration. There are many people who fail to recognise that, approximately, two-thirds of the total indebtedness of the State is invested in our railways: that there is a sum of over £43,000,000 invested in the 5,000 or 6,000 miles of railway which Queensland possesses. If rumour speaks correctly, the deficit in the Railway Department for the year just closed is £1,400,000—a sum which almost makes one shudder in thinking how it is going to be made up. How hon. members opposite can sit year after year and see million after million go down the sink per medium of this Railway Department I cannot understand.

The ACTING PREMIER: Down the sink by way of increased wages and better conditions.

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Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Acting Premier knows perfectly well that there is not a member on this side of the House who has questioned the right of the railway staff to enjoy the increased wages which, to a certain extent, have occasioned this deficit. Here, again, comes the point, that so long as the hon. members opposite are going to look for that as the sole reason for the deficit, and fail to recognise the inefficiency and waste that are going on at the present moment, so long shall we have these tremendous deficits. The Railway Department from year to year is going from bad to worse, and the deficits are increasing year by year. In the first year that Labour had control of the Railway Department they produced £1,000,000 towards the interest on the loans expended in the railway construction of Queensland, but last year, which is the fourth year of their administration, that £1,000,000 towards paying interest has been reduced to £282,000, making a deficit of £1,400,000. Now, that, in my judgment, is a most damning state of affairs.

The ACTING PREMIER: Have not we paid the interest?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Oh, you have paid the interest sure enough, but it has been paid, in my judgment, at the cost of production; because you have to go into the realms of taxation to make up for the deficiency. That is militating against production.

Mr. JAMES: What is your corrective proposal?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: At a later stage we will have the Railway Estimates tabled, and we will have a debate upon that question. When those Estimates were last before this House I ventured to offer certain suggestions to the Secretary for Railways as to how it should be tackled.

The ACTING PREMIER: We did not like the retrenchment you proposed.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I did not suggest any retrenchment. I suggest to the hon. gentleman that, instead of accusing me of misrepresenting facts, his time would be better occupied in not misrepresenting facts himself.

The ACTING PREMIER: I do not know what you call it. You did not use the actual word "retrenchment."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I thought the Acting Premier was a gentleman who had a long memory. Evidently he is not. I made ten or a dozen practical suggestions of how the Railway Department could be improved, and its inefficiency reduced. Whether the Government think that those suggestions are worthy of attention or not, is their business and not mine. So long as Queensland is losing £1,400,000 per annum on the Railway Department, which is controlled and run by Labour, I cannot see any hope for the financial situation.

We have in the Speech the good old hardy annual of the abolition of the Legislative Council. It will be very amusing to hear the real truth about this matter. While we have this proposal embodied in the Governor's Speech, we have at the same time overtures being made to the members of the Legislative Council that they, on this occasion, shall be included in the emoluments

which are to be handed out to members of this House at a later stage.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You did not take yours last time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I did, and I am going to take it this time. (Hear, hear! and laughter.) I want to make my position quite clear—that if there is anything to which I am entitled offering, I am going to take it. But, on the one hand, we are talking about the abolition of the Legislative Council, and on the other hand hon. members opposite are searching round for three nominees to fill vacancies, and they are also putting forward the proposal that the members of the Legislative Council shall receive remuneration during the coming year.

Hon. W. N. GILLIES: Where did you get that from?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You will find where it comes from. This wonderful secrecy, which was so much complained of in connection with the Peace Conference, is not kept quite so astutely in connection with your caucus.

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

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): With other hon. members, I am pleased that on this occasion the House is meeting under different circumstances to what we have done during the last four years, with the great war going on in Europe. We will be able now to set out on different lines. Certain statements have been made by members of the Opposition in connection with a number of matters mentioned in the Speech. As the hon. member for Brisbane stated, some members of the Opposition were prepared to take up any question at all for the purpose of getting political gain. The hon. member for Albert last night made reference to the loss of the "Llewellyn." I am sure every member, and the community generally, regret the loss, not only of that ship, but more particularly of valuable lives. Those men, who went out on an errand of mercy to relieve distress, have been lost, and their families are suffering. They belong to the same class as that which the hon. member for Albert set about to slate, and who, he said, were causing the trouble. They are a portion of the same seafaring men who gave their lives in the interests of humanity. The member for Albert stated that in his opinion the Government ought to make more provision for the dependents of those people who were lost than is provided for in the Workers' Compensation Act. While I might agree with him in that matter, I would like to point out to him that the Workers' Compensation Act provides for £600 to be paid on the death of any man, while the seamen at the present time are out fighting for compensation to the extent of only £500. Yet the seamen are being slated for seeking that which it is only right they should have.

In one portion of the Governor's Speech reference is made to the assistance given to soldiers. While I recognise that the Federal Government are responsible to a large extent for adequately compensating the men who have been away fighting and have [9.30 p.m.] returned to Australia, yet I think the State Government should also do all they possibly can to assist returned men who are unable to look after themselves.

I would suggest to the Government that they should take up the matter of providing a sanatorium and giving assistance to men who have returned from the front and are suffering from rheumatism contracted in the wet trenches. We have in Queensland one of the best hot springs in the world. I refer to the Muckadilla spring, whose hot waters have proved efficacious in many cases of rheumatism. Last session the Government provided a sum of money for maimed and wounded soldiers, and a portion of this money could be used for assisting soldiers who are crippled by rheumatism. I know a trooper who was a canecutter before he went to the war. He did not drink or spend his money unwisely, and he was able to save a few pounds before he left for the war. He came back crippled. One arm was completely gone when he returned, and he applied to the Federal Government for a pension, and they granted him a pension of £1 per week. A week afterwards he began to suffer from rheumatism caused by exposure in the trenches, and he went to Muckadilla, where he had to pay £2 2s. per week for his board. He applied for an increase in his pension, but his application was refused, on the ground that the Government did not pay pensions for rheumatism. That man spent £150 of his own money in order to get the cure at the Muckadilla bore, so that he could go about his work. I hope that the Government will be able to do something in this matter, so that a number of returned soldiers may be able to secure the advantages afforded by the Muckadilla bore and recover their health. We have also quite a number of old people in the State who are suffering from rheumatism, and who have no possible hope of getting away to Muckadilla unless some assistance is afforded them by the Government. There is only one accommodation house, or hotel, at Muckadilla, and everyone who goes there has to pay £2 2s. per week. A lot of old-age pensioners, who are crippled with rheumatism, get only 12s. 6d. per week, and they are not in a position to pay £2 2s. per week for their board. I suggest that the Government should do something for those old pioneers, either by erecting small huts in which they may reside, or by taking over the place which is at present there. That place has some seventy rooms, and the Government might make some of those rooms available for these suffering old people. By doing that they would enable deserving persons to get the benefit of the spring, than which there is nothing better in Australia. I hope the Government will consider the suggestions I have offered, and endeavour to do something to bring the benefits of that health resort within the reach of persons who need its benefit.

In the Speech many Bills are forecast. With regard to certain Acts already in existence, I think the Government have administered them in a way that should secure general recognition. The administration by the Home Secretary's Department of the matters in connection with the late epidemic in Brisbane deserves commendation. Some of the men connected with the Health Department practically gave their lives for the people. I refer now more particularly to Dr. Flynn, of Ipswich, who died from the effects of influenza, and who practically gave his life for the people. Dr. Flynn went about from house to house and place to place attending persons suffering from

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influenza, and he himself became a victim of the disease. I think that a man who gives his life for suffering humanity in that way is just as much a hero as a man who dies on the battlefield. The officers of the Health Department, Dr. Flynn, and other doctors, deserve commendation for the manner in which they dealt with the influenza epidemic and practically wiped it out.

I wish now to say a few words in connection with coal matters. There has been a lot said about the price of coal and the wages the miners are receiving. The New South Wales Government, immediately an order was issued increasing the wages of the miners, set to work to find out what amounts were earned by miners, and they came to the conclusion that the miners were earning too high wages. The men engaged in the coal industry in Queensland, and practically in the whole of the States of the Commonwealth, find that their work is of such a casual nature that they never know whether they are going to earn anything or not. There are hundreds of miners in our own State who are idle, and, taking them as a whole, I may say that miners are the worst paid workmen in the State. On making a comparison of the prices of coal, we find that we are getting our coal in Queensland at a very much cheaper rate than anywhere else. I have taken from the "Economist" of 7th June of this year, page 1072, the following figures dealing with the prices of coal in Great Britain:—

	Before increase of 6.2.	After increase of 6.2.
Best South		
Yorkshire ...	23/- to 23/6	29/2 to 29/9
Derbyshire ...	22/6 to 23/-	27/- to 27/6
Branch ...	27/- to 27/6	33/2 to 33/8
Silkstone ...	23/6 to 24/6	29/8 to 30/8
Best Blythe		
Steam ...	37/6	43/8

All these prices are for coal at pit's mouth. The prices on the continent were as follow:—

FRANCE.

Prices fixed by decree, 17th January.

Unwashed slack ...	25/6 to 27/6
Through and through ...	30/5 to 35/5
Screened ...	42/- to 44/6
Hand picked, large	48/9
Noeux—	
Washed slack, soft ...	40/5
Forge coal ...	51/3
"Boulets" ...	53/-
Ronchamp (steam coals)—	
Lumps ...	50/-
Cobbles, No. 1 ...	46/8
" No. 2 ...	46/8
" No. 3 ...	46/8
Washed slack ...	46/8

GERMANY (Upper Silesia), State Mines.

Prices from 1st January.

Flaming coal—	
Large ...	43/-
Cubes ...	43/-
Nuts (washed) ...	45/-
Peas (washed) ...	44/-
(unwashed) ...	39/- to 49/-
Slack ...	38/6
Small ...	39/-
Small screenings ...	37/- to 38/-
Dust (washed) ...	38/-
(unwashed) ...	31/- to 32/-

In New South Wales in 1916 the price was 11s. per ton. A rise of 3s. per ton was awarded in 1916, making the price 14s., and

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in 1919 another rise of 3s. was given, making the price 17s. per ton. In Queensland the prices before and after the last rise were—

	Before.	After.
Bundamba ...	11/6	14/3
Darling Downs	12/3 to 13/3	15/3 to 16/3
Blair Athol ...	9/6	12/3
Bluff ...	12/6	15/3
Burrum ...	16/11	21/2
Tannymorel ...	13/9	16/9
Mount Mulligan	17/-	20/3

Those figures show that Queensland coal is sold far more cheaply than practically anywhere else in the world.

Mr. ROBERTS: Do you want to get a better price?

At fifteen minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not asking for any more. All I am asking for is that the men engaged in this industry should receive a proper wage and proper conditions. I am not concerned what the prices are.

Mr. ROBERTS: I am concerned about trying to find out what you are advocating.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am giving to the House the prices paid for coal. I want to point out that when those prices were raised in New South Wales the Holman Nationalist Government paid the 3s. in common with other consumers, but appointed a Commission to inquire into the wages the men were getting, and I want to compare their action with the action of the Government here. On the other hand, the Queensland Government said, "We are prepared to pay an increase which will cover the increased wages of the miners, but we are not going to pay any additional profits to the colliery owners." The consequence was that in most cases they paid 2s. instead of 3s. The 2s. refers to the Bundamba district, and in the Central district the increase was only 1s. 6d., so that, as a result of the Government action, the proposed increase was reduced by one-half there, and by one-third in the Bundamba district. In respect of the present increase the Government are taking up the same attitude. They are quite willing that the increased wages and the increased cost to the employers should be covered, but they are objecting to pay anything which would give increased profits to the colliery owners. In New South Wales, on the other hand, the Government immediately appointed a Commission, practically trying to neutralise the increase in the miners' wages.

Now, I want to deal with the Roma oil bore. It has been pretty widely rumoured that we will never get oil at Roma while there is an American oil trust. Wherever you go you can hear that talked about. I heard the statement, and made it my business to visit Roma and inquire into the whole thing. I found that they had got to 3,705 feet. They were in sandstone at that time, and a bit was down in the bore at the bottom—I suppose about 5 or 6 feet of 6-inch steel. When I inquired as to how it got down there, I found that it was through a weld. I inquired where the welding was done, and I was told that it was done in the Ipswich workshops, and the statement was then made that there must be somebody in the workshops who was working with the trust, and that they were responsible for the stoppage of the bore. I immediately inquired into that matter to see if that was correct or not. I may be asked whether I am a detective or not, but I like to get at the bottom

of things for myself. I found that a stock that screws on to the bit was sent down to Ipswich to be welded on to the stem. That stem was welded in the Ipswich workshops by one of the leading blacksmiths, and passed by the foreman, and went up to Roma with all the appearance of being all right. Nothing wrong could be detected in connection with it, and it was simply an accident that it was only welded on the outside instead of being welded right through. It was rather an unfortunate affair that that was so, seeing that they are down nearly to the depth at which they expect to prove whether there is oil there or not. Every effort, so far as I could see when I was up there, is being made to get the bit out of the hole. A grip has been got on it, and they are now endeavouring to get more power on it in order to pull it up, and I am of opinion that it will be managed, because the only thing that is holding the bit is the sandstone that has got bedded around it. They only need sufficient power to pull the bit out, and before long they should be able to go on testing for oil. If they succeed in obtaining oil, it will be one of the things that will make Queensland.

Just a word in regard to the collieries. I was reading a statement the other day in connection with the British collieries, and I find that there is a waste of £20,000,000 per year in Great Britain in the consumption of coal, because they do not use the whole of the by-products from coal, which are very considerable. I do not intend to take up the time of the House by giving them all, as on a previous occasion I mentioned something like 150 by-products from the distribution of coal tar.

I am glad to see that the Governor's Speech states that the Government are proceeding with all inquiries for the establishment for a State iron and steel works. One of the benefits that will accrue to the people from the establishment of these works will be the establishment of an up-to-date coking plant, so that the coal of our State can be properly manufactured, and the by-products made use of, and in that way we will save the waste which at present exists in connection with the consumption of coal. We in Queensland are practically wasting thousands of pounds per year through not using the coal in a proper manner. However, it is proposed to establish an up-to-date coking works that will turn our coal into coke for fuel purposes, and the by-products from the residue will be used, and many thousands saved.

Quite a number of statements have been made in connection with the Warra coalmine. The hon. member for Burnett last night said that £46,000 of the people's money had been lost through Warra. I want to give that statement a denial. Forty-six thousand pounds have not been lost to the State through the Warra coalmine, but £46,000 have been expended on the mine, which is a different proposition altogether. The machinery is there, and if the cost of the engine, the cost of the electric plant, the cost of the pumps, and the cost of the buildings are taken into consideration, what has been lost at Warra is not £46,000, but the difference between what was paid for the machinery and implements and the value that will be obtained for the machinery and implements when they are sold, or the value of the plant at the present time. I have a

report from the Chief Inspector of Mines in connection with Warra, which gives an analysis of the coal there. It says—

"Five seams have been located between the surface and 555 feet, particulars of which are given below, but so far only the seam at 200 feet has been operated on—in the first instance by a small company whose interests were afterwards acquired for State purposes, and, secondly, from new shafts sunk by the Crown near the railway with the intention of working the seam at 555 feet.

"The seam at 200 feet, which is of excellent quality, highly valued for railway purposes, was opened out on as a commencement, pending the conclusion of the war, and the return of conditions which will lessen the difficulties of providing the necessary machinery to continue sinking to work the deeper seam."

That is the report of the Chief Engineer, published about a fortnight ago. That being so, there seems to be some difficulty in understanding why the Government closed down the Warra mine. The mine is like most other coalmines: A certain portion of the field contains a seam 3 feet thick, but where the Government sank the shaft close to the railway line to enable them to tip the coal from the pithead into the trucks they found only a 2-foot seam. They got a 2-foot seam and worked away to the rise, and, instead of the seam getting thicker, it got thinner until it was only 18 inches thick. As everyone knows, it is unprofitable to work an 18-inch seam of coal; but there is no reason why the 3-foot seam on the other portion of the property could not be worked profitably. I hope that the Government will go into this matter and find out just who was responsible for putting down two shafts with up-to-date appliances, for installing boilers and an electric plant that has never been used, and for putting up expensive buildings, and for spending so much on the surface at Warra before they proved whether the coal was worth working or not. If any Government officers are doing things which they should not do, they should be dealt with, and the Government should see that the money of the State is properly spent. Twelve months ago I visited Warra for the first time, and when I came back here I stated that there was no possible chance of doing anything with the 2-foot seam of coal, that the best thing would be to close down on the 2-foot seam and work where the seam was proved to be 3 feet to 3 feet 3 inches thick. That was not done. They continued for the twelve months working on the 2-foot seam when there was no possible chance of getting any advantage. It is only right that hon. members should know this, and I hope the Government will go into the matter and find out who is responsible. The men up there, as has been stated previously, offered to take the mine on tribute. The position is this: There were eighty men employed at the Warra mine. There was a [10 p.m.] certain number of the men prepared to take it on tribute and provide work, not for eighty but for eighteen men, leaving the other men out altogether. Whether the eighteen men could have made a success of it, I do not know. The hon. member for Dalby has made a complaint, through the Press, that these men were not allowed

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to work the mine, and were refused timber. I do not think the Government should give timber or machinery for nothing. The men made an offer to work the mine on royalty conditions. If they were prepared to work on a tribute basis, the same as is done in copper shows, and pay the Government a royalty, I think it was a bad policy to close the mine down and allow the timber to rot instead of giving the men a chance of working it.

There are one or two other matters on which I would like to voice my opinion. We have foreshadowed in the Governor's Speech a Bill to prevent the profiteer from exacting exorbitant profits from the people. I think the Government are wise in taking the first opportunity of dealing with this matter.

Mr. GUNN: They ought to declare him a marsupial and bring him under the Dingo Act.

Mr. GLEDSON: If the hon. member had been here when the hon. member for Brisbane was speaking, he would have heard that in Austria and other places where profiteers were found, they erected gallows in the streets to hang them. If some of the profiteers here were hung up in the streets, it would be better for the people of this State.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: We could hang them on the street poles.

Mr. GLEDSON: We could hang them on the electric poles which are being put up in Brisbane now, and it would be one of the sights of Brisbane. Opposition members have said that there is no profiteering.

Mr. ROBERTS: The Opposition say they are out to put it down.

Mr. GLEDSON: We shall be glad to get their assistance when the Bill comes on to deal with this matter.

Mr. ROBERTS: Introduce a Bill, and you will soon see.

Mr. GLEDSON: When the present Government took up the matter of profiteering, and tried to prevent undue inflation of prices, the Nationalist Government immediately stepped in, and under the Commonwealth War Precautions Act took over the full control of the fixation of prices. The result was that the price of galvanised iron and other articles jumped up, and the merchants openly flouted the price-fixing of the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth Government also issued a regulation that no one should carry a red flag, and, when a few men in Brisbane carried a red flag they put the War Precautions Act into operation, and those men were imprisoned for six months. Compare their action towards those men with their action towards the profiteers who openly flouted their price-fixing, as shown in a report in the "Brisbane Courier" on 2nd November, 1917, of the proceedings of the Interstate Commission which sat in Brisbane—

"E. G. Saunders, secretary Brisbane Grocers' Association, stated that the fixed minimum prices had ordinarily been observed in the trade. The committee issued prices from month to month. Some of the prices had been increased beyond the proclaimed prices since 1st October last, and no exception had been

taken to such increases by the authorities. Almost all the lines of groceries had gone up considerably since the war started."

The secretary of the Brisbane Grocers' Association said they had not kept to the prices—that they had sold above the proclaimed prices, and yet the authorities took no action—

"S. Howes, manager Queensland Agency Company, said he had not conformed to all the prices issued in the list of 1st August, 1916. The proclaimed prices had been ignored throughout the Commonwealth.

"T. McWilliams, manager Brabant and Company, said he wished to confirm practically all the evidence given by the previous witness. In his opinion, if an illegal act had been committed in departing from proclaimed prices, all merchants in the trade were guilty; but morally he contended they had done no wrong."

That shows the different treatment which the National Government has meted out. What harm did the carrying of a red flag do? I do not suppose it did any good, but it would not do any harm. It did not prevent people getting clothes or food, but when a proclamation was issued, under the War Precautions Act, fixing the prices of certain goods, the merchants openly flouted it, and the authorities took no notice of them. I think it is necessary that the profiteer should be dealt with, and that a Fair Prices Bill should be introduced.

There are one or two other matters foreshadowed in the Speech, which, I think, would be of benefit to the State. One is in connection with a State housing scheme. It is necessary that houses should be provided for the workers, not only in the cities but in the country districts. The Government should bring in a Bill at the earliest opportunity to provide decent housing accommodation for the people in the backblocks of our country.

Another matter I want to deal with is the amendment of the Mining Act. I hope there will not be any mistake made this time, but that the law dealing with coalmines will be separated from that dealing with metalliferous mines, and that the law will be consolidated, so that those who are working under it will know where they stand. What is the position at the present time? We find that the managers or owners of collieries can practically do as they like. They can flout the orders of the mining inspectors, carry them out as they wish, or leave them alone as they wish. What has been the result? There have been several fatal accidents in the coalmining districts during this year. In one colliery there has been an explosion every six months. After the second explosion an inspector went along and said, "There will have to be something done here, else there is going to be a bad accident. I recommend that a competent man be placed there for the purpose of examining and testing for explosive gases in order to prevent an accident." The manager simply flouted his recommendation, and refused to put on anyone except the man he had. Previous to that a man was burnt as a result of an explosion. That was nine months ago. From that day to this that

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man has not been able to do a tap of work, and he has practically been injured permanently by that explosion. The company still flouted the inspector's recommendations and refused to put on a competent man. The result was that another explosion occurred, and two men were killed in that mine. Again the inspectors came along and made a further recommendation. They said, "We will not allow that mine to work again unless it is worked with safety lamps." The manager said, "What am I going to care for your recommendations? I am going to work with naked lights, not with safety lamps." And he went on working with naked lights. I do not think this sort of thing should be allowed to continue. The Mining Act does not give authority to deal with it. If the Mines Department cannot deal with those things, the Mining Act wants amending immediately, so that the Department will have power to stop that sort of thing. What is it coming to, if inspectors' recommendations are going to be flouted? Then we go a bit further, and find that at the same mine the examiners were deputed one day to go down and test the mine. Two of them went down, and when they came up they reported that there was explosive gas in the mine, and it was not fit for the men to work in. They were immediately sacked, and have had to go away to New South Wales for work.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Criminal!

Mr. GLEDSON: I think it is criminal for this sort of thing to go on under our Mining Act, and it should be stopped. I hope that an early opportunity will be taken to separate the two parts of the Act, and give inspectors power to enforce their recommendations. I am sorry that these accidents occurred. I think the Government should immediately institute an inquiry into the causes of the explosions of gas in the mines of Queensland. This year we have had five men killed by explosive gas in that district, in addition to several being injured. As our mines increase in depth we stand a greater chance of having accidents, because the further we go down, the greater the danger from explosive gas. When you are working near the surface, and vents occur in the strata which allow the gas to escape, there is not the same danger as there is when you are further down, when you get strata that is firm and solid, and keep down below the gas that exudes through the coal. It is necessary that the Government should go into the matter, and see that stringent regulations are enforced. I hope we shall have the assistance of the Opposition in dealing with that matter effectively. At the time of those accidents members of the Opposition and of the Government were seized with a desire to do something. I hope they will not forget it, but will give us assistance to have provisions embodied in the Act. I shall be willing to assist the Government to frame measures for the safety and well-being of the collieries and metalliferous mines, and I hope we will get an Act that will be a credit to our State.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

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