

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST 1919**

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THURSDAY, 14 AUGUST, 1919.

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

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 1.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER: I have to report that I presented to His Excellency the Governor Appropriation Bill, No. 1, for the Royal assent, and that His Excellency was pleased, in my presence, to subscribe his assent thereto, in the name and on behalf of His Majesty.

A message was also received from His Excellency the Governor conveying his assent to the Bill.

AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following from the Auditor-General:—

Report upon the balance-sheet of the Queensland National Bank, Limited, for the year ended 30th June, 1919.

Ordered to be printed.

QUESTIONS.

CRAB AND CRAYFISH INSPECTION FEES.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Acting Premier—

“1. Is he aware that regulation 44 of the Fish Supply Act of 1916 and the State Enterprises Act of 1918 provides that an inspection fee of 1s. 6d. is payable in respect of each crab and crayfish (other than sand crabs) produced for inspection?”

“2. Is not this fee out of all proportion, and will not this payment have the effect of increasing the cost of this commodity to the community?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. No.”

MEAT SOLD AT ROMA-STREET STATE BUTCHERY.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*) asked the Acting Premier—

“What quantities of (a) frozen meat, (b) chilled meat, (c) fresh meat were sold through the State butchery at Roma street during the year ended 30th June, 1919?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“(a) 2,234,064 lb.

“(b) 1,116,192 lb.

“(c) Nil.”

DIFFERENCES IN PRICES OF FROZEN, CHILLED, AND FRESH MEAT AT STATE BUTCHERS' SHOPS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Acting Chief Secretary—

“What is the average difference per pound in retail value, according to the State butcher's shop authorities, between (a) frozen meat and chilled meat; (b) frozen meat and fresh meat?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“(a) The State butcher's shop authorities have not made any difference per pound in retail value between frozen and chilled meat; (b) the State butcher's shops do not deal in fresh meat.”

USE OF STATE-OWNED MOTOR-CARS FOR CONVEYANCE OF SICK AND WOUNDED RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Acting Premier—

“1. Were any of the twenty State-owned motor-cars, kept for the use of Ministers and Government departments in Brisbane, ever used for the conveyance of sick or wounded returned soldiers from the Central Railway Station to Kangaroo Point Hospital?”

“2. If so, on what occasions?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“1 and 2. Inquiries are being made.”

ALLEGED EVASION OF REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACT.

Mr. SMITH (*Mackay*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to the statements reported to have been made by Mr. Knox, general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company, before the Royal Commission on the sugar industry, in which he stated that he had found a flaw in the regulations of Sugar Cane Prices Act enabling his company to evade the purposes of the said Act by forcing the canegrowers to sell their cane to a third party?”

“2. Is he aware that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company have, by exerting economic and other pressure on their suppliers, induced them to offer their cane to a Mr. Forster, Sydney, on terms dictated by the said company?”

“3. Will he take steps this session to amend the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Act in the direction of prohibiting contracting outside the Act in the manner indicated?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. Yes.

“3. In consequence of the agreement with the Federal Government no alteration in the Act can be made during this session.”

ESTABLISHMENT OF STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines—

“When will a definite announcement be made regarding the establishment and site of the proposed iron and steel works?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“There will be no avoidable delay in the matter.”

STATEMENTS REGARDING REPATRIATION OF SOLDIERS.

Mr. CORSER asked the Acting Premier—

“1. Has his attention been called to

the following official Government statements regarding repatriation:—

(a) Lands Department report, showing that to 31st December, 1917, the State Government had settled 423 soldiers on the land;

(b) The special return, tabled last July at the request of Mr. Macartney, showing that a total of 337 soldiers had been settled on the land by the State;

(c) The statement appearing in a Government advertisement in the ‘Worker’ last January, showing that up till that time 1,200 soldiers had been settled by the State, which was preparing also to settle a further 10,000 men during the year 1919;

(d) The statement by Mr. Theodore at the Premiers’ Conference a week later that 525 soldiers had been settled on the land by the State, and that preparations had been made to settle another 1,700 odd?

“2. How does he reconcile the contradictions in these statements?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“1 and 2. I am having the matter looked into.”

USE OF MOTOR-CARS OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS FOR CONVEYANCE OF RETURNED SOLDIERS.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*) asked the Acting Chief Secretary—

“1. Have the motor-cars of the leader of the Opposition, of the member for Bulimba, or of any other of those who sit in opposition to His Majesty's Government, been lent for the purpose of transporting returned soldiers from the railway station, Brisbane, to the Kangaroo Point Hospital?”

“2. If so, on what occasions?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“1 and 2. I have no information on the subject.”

BALANCE-SHEET RESPECTING BUTTER SEIZED AND SOLD IN LONDON.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“1. When will a balance-sheet be prepared and forwarded to factories concerned in respect to butter seized and sold in London?”

“2. When will the balance of profit be distributed?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“1. No butter was seized, consequently no balance-sheet is necessary.

“2. See No. 1.”

PRODUCE FOR LOCAL REQUIREMENTS SOLD BY STATE PRODUCE AGENCY.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“What has been the value of the produce sold in Queensland for local requirements by the State Produce Agency during the year 1918-1919?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“The hon. member should address his question to the Chief Secretary.”

INFLUENZA EPIDEMIC—THEATRES CLOSED AND THEATRES OPEN.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Home Secretary—

“1. During the recent influenza epidemic what theatres were allowed to remain open, and which were compelled to close?”

“2. What was the reason for differentiation between theatres in this respect?”

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

“1 and 2. Picture shows and theatres having sliding roofs or openings and supplied with adequate ventilation were open (such as Tivoli Roof, Theatre Royal, West's, and Stadium), others not complying in this respect closed.”

LOSS TO WORKERS FROM INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Treasurer—

“1. Of the eighty-four industrial disputes which the records of the Labour Department show as having taken place in Queensland during the two years ended 30th June, 1919, how many have caused loss of work to employees?”

“2. How many employees in the aggregate were affected by these stoppages?”

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

“1 and 2. No records available.”

EXPORT OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES FROM BOWEN.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“The number of cases of fruit and bags of vegetables exported from Bowen for the months of April, May, June, and July, 1918, also the number of cases of fruit and bags of vegetables for the corresponding months in 1919?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“Figures represent cases unless otherwise stated—

	Bar tuns.	Oranges.	Tomatoes.	Vegetables.	Cucumbers.	Others— Mostly Pines.
1918.						
April	...	536	...	...	...	110
May	...	1,234	642	...	28	187
June	...	246	9,717	...	105	32
July	42	20	23,922	22*	797	88
1919.						
April	...	586	7½	55	230	...
May	...	1,511	7,104	{ 103* } 42	1,167	48
June	...	1,064	23,732	{ 52* } 73	640	80
July	...	602	10,583	456*	8	69

\* Denotes bags.

BEEF PURCHASED BY QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT FOR COMMONWEALTH GOVERNMENT FOR USE OF TROOPS.

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

“1. Did the Government, during the year 1917-18, purchase certain quantities of beef from the meatworks and resell the same to the Commonwealth Government for the use of troops?”

“2. If so, at what price was the beef purchased from the meatworks?”

“3. At what price was it sold to the Commonwealth?”

The ACTING PREMIER replied—

“1. Yes.

“2. 3½d. per lb.

“3. 4¼d. per lb.”

ISSUE OF STATE BLUE BOOK.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Acting Chief Secretary—

“1. Will a State Blue Book be issued during the coming session?”

“2. If so, when is it likely to be available for the information of the House?”

The ACTING CHIEF SECRETARY replied—

“1 and 2. Yes, if possible; the necessary material will be wanting until the reclassification of the service is completed.”

CENTRALISED SYSTEM IN REGARD TO GOVERNMENT RAILWAY STORES.

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

“1. Is it a fact, as rumoured among employees of the Railway Department, that the Government intends to revert to the old centralised system in regard to Government stores, and to appoint as permanent head of the centralised stores branch Mr. Gallagher, now Stores Superintendent at Roma Street?”

“2. Is Mr. Gallagher the senior officer in the Stores Branch?”

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

“1 and 2. The Government's intentions in this direction will be disclosed at the proper time.”

RAILWAY FREIGHTS FROM SYDNEY TO BRISBANE AND WARWICK.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What is the through freight from Sydney to Brisbane on general groceries, tobacco, drapery, boots, and hardware?”

“2. What proportion of the above freight is credited to Queensland?”

“3. What is the freight on same class of goods consigned from Sydney to Warwick?”

“4. What proportion of the above freight is credited to Queensland?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

“1. £6 15s. per ton, plus 1s. transhipping charges.

- "2. £2 2s. 1d. per ton.  
 "3. £10 4s. 11d. per ton, being sum of two local rates, Sydney to Wallangarra, Wallangarra to Warwick.  
 "4. £2 15s. 2d. per ton."

#### HYDRO-ELECTRIC SCHEME FOR CONDRAMINE RIVER.

Mr. G. P. BARNES ask the Treasurer—

"1. Has his attention been directed to the decision of the Governments of France and Canada to establish hydro-electric schemes in their respective countries?

"2. Will he allow the hydro-electric expert recently appointed to inspect and report upon the suitability of the Condamine River for the purpose of the establishment of a hydro-electric scheme?"

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

"1. No.

"2. The matter will receive consideration."

#### BARAMBAH SETTLEMENT—NUMBER OF ABORIGINALS, AND MEDICAL AID FOR INMATES.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Home Secretary—

"1. How many aboriginals are there on the Barambah Settlement?

"2. Is there a medical officer provided for the settlement; if not, what arrangements are made to provide medical aid for the inmates?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1. 530.

"2. Yes, visits weekly, and whenever else emergency necessitates—connected by telephone—attends cases also at his own surgery."

#### SEAFORTH REPURCHASED ESTATE BILL.

##### INITIATION.

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

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirability of introducing a Bill to enable the Seaforth Estate, acquired under the Agricultural Lands Purchase Act of 1894, to be dealt with as Crown land under and subject to the Land Acts, 1910 to 1918."

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion went as formal. The hon. member must recognise that it could not be put at this stage unless it was formal.

Question put and passed.

#### TAXATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND DAIRYING LANDS.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), in moving—

"That, in the opinion of this House, the prosperity of the State of Queensland

[*Hon. J. H. Coyne.*

depends upon increased primary production, and that in order to increase such production, and enable producers to compete in the markets of the world, the application of the Land Tax Act of 1915, in respect to lands used for agriculture and dairying, be either removed or reduced."

said: This is a motion that was brought on last session, but, owing to other business, was not put to a division, so that the opinion of the House was not given upon it. The question is even more pressing than it was last year. Last year we had at least nine months of drought—nine months out of twelve—when there were no taxation values in the land, when land produced absolutely nothing. Yet that tax was collected on the twelve months. I will admit that in some cases, under section 46 of the Land Tax Act, returns and deductions have been made. Section 46 is the saving clause of that Act, and some farmers have been able to take advantage of it, but there are hundreds of others who know absolutely nothing about it. They have made no claims and they have received no returns, although the money which has gone to pay the land tax should have gone to buy their children boots and clothes, which they have consequently had to do without. We have a cry right throughout Australia, and, perhaps, throughout the world, for a cheapening of foodstuffs; and, if it is necessary to have a plentiful supply of food and cheaper food, surely it is in the interests of the whole of the people that all taxation should be removed from the lands used for the production of food, and that people should be encouraged to remain on the land and produce foodstuffs for the people. At present I have thirty-two or thirty-three schools in my electorate, and I find that seven boys out of eight boys in all those schools, or, at the very least, seven out of nine or ten, have no intention of remaining on the land. They are studying for scholarships or something else in order that they may get away from the land because there are practically no returns from the land.

Mr. SMITH: You are a Jeremiah.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am giving the facts of the case. If we want the people to remain on the land, it is only right that all taxes should be removed from the land used for the production of foodstuffs; that they should be made as free as possible, and that people should have every encouragement to remain on the land. It is all very well for hon. members in this House who are drawing £300 a year, and perhaps another £300 or £400 extra. That is very much better than farming. I know many small farmers who scarcely have enough with which to buy their children boots and clothes and live decently, and yet this Government come in as first mortgagees of the farms and claim the first payment out of the proceeds from the land, and the farmers have to pay away money for taxes which ought to go towards finding their children in boots and clothes. Great Britain and the United States of America—those two large Powers especially—have given great consideration to the question of keeping the people on the land and to growing foodstuffs for the people.

Mr. SMITH: There is a land tax in Great Britain.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Great Britain has agreed to pay a certain price for the farmers' produce for the next two years. They say they were caught napping when the war started; they were caught with a shortage of foodstuffs, but that would not happen again. I contend that this is not a party question at all. It should be looked at from a non-party point of view, and, if the Government find that through the land tax or anything else—no matter who is to blame for it—the conditions on the land to-day are such that people will not remain on the land, then those conditions should be altered and there should be a better state of things brought about. Only last week I heard of two men leaving their farms. One went into the Police Force and the other applied for a position in connection with railway works. He came to me for a recommendation, stating that he was leaving his farm in order to work on the railway, and two other men, who would have made excellent citizens and had a fair amount of money, have left the State. They were the sons of people who came from Victoria some ten or twelve years ago with something like £10,000 or £12,000 which they invested in Queensland, but those people would not allow their own sons to invest their money in land in Queensland. They had to pay £80 to £90 land tax and they said, "No more for my sons. They will go where there is less to pay to the Government, and where the man on the land can get a better return for his labour."

Mr. COLLINS: Where will they go?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They have gone to Victoria, from whence they came, and I think they are the best judges.

Mr. COLLINS: They pay £1 an acre rent in Victoria.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are the best judges, and, instead of investing their money here, they went back to Victoria. If the hon. member is not satisfied with what I state, let him look up the reports of the Labour Department. He must know, and every hon. member ought to know, of the different class of people who are coming here now from the other States to those who came here ten or twelve years ago, or even eight or nine years ago. In those days men were encouraged to come here and settle on the land. They were encouraged to sell out in the other States and bring their capital to Queensland, which hundreds did. Many of them brought from £5,000 to £10,000 and settled in Queensland. They made trade, they made employment, and they enriched our storekeepers and the workers, and now that they have got all their money invested in land and improvements they cannot get away. But is the same class of people coming here now?

Mr. SMITH: It is a pity you cannot get away.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I wish I could. I would like to sell out for what the land was valued at ten years ago, but the hon. member ought to know that because of the policy of his Government no one will buy land in Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: Nonsense.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let us look at the different class of people who are coming here now. I do not object to them coming

here, as probably some of them would be good workers if they could get work; but the returns of the Labour secretaries from the different centres state that many labouring men are coming here from the other States for whom there is no work, and the Government have to find them in rations.

Mr. SMITH: If people paid any attention to your statements, they would never come to Queensland.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Labour secretary at Maryborough made that report, and it appeared in the Press. He stated that what added to the unemployment was the number of men coming from the other States and the Government had to keep them in food when they came. I am pointing that out in order to show that a different class of people are coming here now to the people who came here some years ago. No doubt many of those coming now would be good men if there was any work for them to do, and they would no doubt increase the wealth of this country if they had the opportunity. Instead of bringing men here as producers the Government are bringing men who have to be kept, which is a very different matter altogether. That is one reason why I say we should revert to the policy of encouraging people to come here and settle on our land, make employment for men, and increase our production. That is the only sane policy when we look at the conditions of Australia to-day and see the burdens that Australia has to face. Our war debts amount to something like £300,000,000, interest on which has to be met, and I hope that, before it is finished, another £100,000,000 will be added to the debt, because the men who have been fighting and who have done their duty must be looked after, and, if to do that it takes a quarter of what it cost to see the war through, we must not grumble, but must see that those men get it. There is only one way to pay our debts. If a farmer gets into debt and has a mortgage on his farm, if a business man gets into debt, or if a working man gets into debt, there is only one way of paying that debt, and that is by doing more work and earning more money. There is no difference in regard to nations. They cannot get out of debt in any other way. There is no royal way of paying your debts. The only way is to do more work and earn more money. That is another reason why I say we should make it as easy as possible for people to remain on the land, and, in order to keep them there, we should give them every possible encouragement. All workers except the man on the land have some guarantee of a living wage, which is quite right. A man should be treated, not as a mere chattel of trade merely to keep him on the job, but should have a living wage assured to him, for which, of course, he should work. But the farmer has no sure wage. For nine months during the past year the land has refused to grow anything on account of drought. There has hardly been three months of a good season, yet this Government collect land taxes for the whole of the twelve months, and have taken more out of the farms than the farmers have for themselves. The Federal and State taxes combined have been more than the farmers themselves have had to keep their families on. I know men who have had £150 to pay in land tax.

Mr. SMITH: They must have had a good deal of land, then.

*Mr. Bebbington.]*

Mr. BEBBINGTON: After paying wages and other things, they have not had £150 left to keep their families for the twelve months.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is the box of matches story over again.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the hon. member for Toowoomba will look up "Hansard," he will find out where the Minister acknowledged that the refreshment-rooms were charging 6d. for a tin box of matches.

The SPEAKER: Order! The question of match boxes has nothing to do with this motion. The hon. member must not take any notice of the interjections of the hon. member for Toowoomba.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member said that I stated something which was false last night, but everything I said was correct, and I can prove it from "Hansard." The producer should be guaranteed a living wage. Even to-day we have a surplus of production. Our farmers are still working. Even though they have had a nine months' drought, they are producing more butter and cheese by a long way than Queensland can consume. Some of the papers, especially the "Daily Standard," wrongly suggest that because there is a surplus production, prices should be brought down. I do not know what level they would bring it down to, but they are all for cheap food.

Mr. WEIR: That is the doctrine of supply and demand.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes; but you won't apply it to labour. There is no reason for reducing the poor farmer down to starvation wages. Why is the farmer not entitled to a living wage? Why should he be made to supply the workers and people who are riding about in their motor-cars with the results of his labour while he is receiving insufficient remuneration?

Mr. BRENNAN: Farmers are getting better prices now than ever they did before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member knows as much about that as he does about silos. They are getting a good price to-day because the Federal Government are taking possession of all the produce.

Mr. CARTER: Commandeering it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Commandeering it, if you like, but at a fair price, and that makes all the difference. It is a very payable price, and the farmers are satisfied.

Mr. BRENNAN: Since this Government came into power.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This Government have nothing to do with it; the hon. member is talking like a school boy. Though there is this overproduction to-day, I will guarantee that you could not produce a pound of butter or cheese which is going into the stores for double what the farmer is getting for it to-day. At the present time you cannot buy chaff under £10 a ton.

Mr. CARTER: Nonsense.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You supply it, then. You cannot buy it for less than that, and I do not know what will happen if it keeps dry for another two or three months; the conditions will then be very bad. We talk about the methods which should be adopted to make farming pay. Some people say that when we have to meet the land tax we

should adopt better methods. We have adopted the best methods that I know of for preserving butter. The hon. member for Toowoomba was talking last night about silos, and said he had advocated the construction of half-ton silos, but I can tell him that the people he was speaking to were pulling his leg. I am surprised at a man of his age going to a public meeting, and allowing farmers, whom he puts down to be the silliest people outside the asylum, to pull his leg as they did.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Fassifern said 2 cwt.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They were pulling the hon. member's leg.

The SPEAKER: Order! I would like the hon. member to point out to me how the question of silos can be introduced in connection with this motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes; we cannot live on land without silos. The hon. member for Toowoomba, at a public meeting—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member must be aware that he is advocating that the land tax should be either "removed or reduced" in connection with lands used for agriculture and dairying. That is the gist of this motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am giving reasons why it should be removed.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is attempting to show how little the hon. member for Toowoomba knows about silos. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member has been giving the farmers advice as to how to make money to pay the land tax, and I want to show that they cannot pay the land tax, and I am sure you will allow me to show that. Taking the hon. member's statement, if you grew 10 tons of wheat to the acre, you would want twenty silos to the acre. If you had a dray to take the stuff in, and only took one ton at a time, you would want two silos for every load of stuff you took in. You would simply have all silos and no farms. (Government laughter.) When the hon. member talks about practical men—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must know that there is no reference to silos in the motion. He will have some other occasion for discussing silos, but they are not included in this motion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will show you a practical way of paying the land tax. Instead of doing what the hon. member for Toowoomba advised, the practical thing is to do as I did—to make out a square, say of 18 feet, and put 100 tons in that silo. I am proving that, if a person has to pay the land tax, he cannot do it by acting on the hon. member's advice. Then we come to this question—it affects soldiers more or less on their settlements. A question was asked to-day, and the Honorary Minister, the Hon. Mr. Hunter, made the remark that the Government could not give soldiers a preference for selections, because the land would be dummed. Land is not the only thing that is dummed. There are plenty of positions and other things that are dummed. I would like to ask the Hon. Mr. Hunter, who has been dumming the Agent-General's position for him for the last twelve months—(laughter)—so that any time he likes he

[Mr. Bebbington.]

can drop into it? What is the difference between dummying a selection and dummying a position? (Laughter.) I cannot see any difference.

The ACTING PREMIER: Do you say the land tax has been operating harshly against the farmers?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly, I do.

The ACTING PREMIER: In what particular cases?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will give you plenty of cases.

The ACTING PREMIER: Give us a few of them.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will give you a list of them, if you like.

The ACTING PREMIER: You gave us a list last year, which was absolutely untrue.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: To prove that I am correct, I had to write four letters before I got any reduction in my own land tax.

The ACTING PREMIER: The statements you made last year were proved to be false.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do not think so.

The ACTING PREMIER: I will give you the particulars.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In any case there was big profiteering in the hon. gentleman's department, and the people who paid the taxes should have had that money to enable them to make a living. I know that those men did not make a living wage.

The ACTING PREMIER: Why did you try to mislead the House last year by giving false information?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The information was correct. The amount might have been slightly out, but not very much. (Laughter.) It might have been a few pence out. When a man has to leave his home and go outside and work in order to pay the land tax, it does not matter whether you are a few pence out or not, the principle is the same.

The ACTING PREMIER: They were faked cases to bolster up a bad case.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They were nothing of the sort. The particulars were perfectly correct. The addresses which were given to me I gave to the hon. gentleman. Another method which would enable us to pay the land tax is to improve the value of our products on the farm. Last session I submitted to the Secretary for Agriculture a question regarding dried milk. I found that people down South and in New Zealand had a means of taking more advantage of their land than we had in this respect, so I asked the Minister to make inquiries and see if it could not be done here. I will give the hon. gentleman's reply—

"Before considering the proposal for stimulating the dried milk industry here, the Queensland system of home separating would have to be brought into line with the New Zealand and Victorian practice of separating at central depôts. The suggestion to send an officer to New Zealand will be considered. The assistance asked for is available under the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act."

That is a way in which I wanted to raise the value of our products from the farm, so that the people could pay the land tax.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman's motion does not deal with methods of raising sufficient money to meet the land tax. His motion is to "remove or reduce" it in certain cases. He must advance arguments why it should be removed or reduced. He is giving instances of methods for paying the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, if we could pay it, we would not ask for it to be removed or reduced.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has framed his own resolution. He must show, in the discussion, reasons why the land tax should be removed or reduced, not methods for paying the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Well, the reason I have tried to give why it should be removed is that the farmer cannot make the money out of the land to pay the tax. That is also a reason why it should be reduced.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. gentleman confines himself to that aspect, he will be quite in order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have tried other means of making money to pay the tax, and last session I asked the Secretary for Agriculture to make inquiries regarding some means for making more money. The hon. gentleman put it aside, and we were left to pay the tax in our own way. I have spent a little of my own money, and from information I have received I find that what I asked the Minister to do was reasonable. The people down South have been doubling their incomes from the land, and there would be a possibility of its being adopted in Queensland, only the Government would not assist us in the way they should. Another reason why expenses should be taken from the land and settlement encouraged on the land is that of our national wellbeing. Unless we settle our lands—unless we get from them the greatest amount of production—we shall not be able to meet our debts, and we will not have the population to meet the enemy if he should come to Australia. The population of Australia to-day is barely 5,000,000. Just at our back door we have a population in Java and the adjacent islands of 45,000,000.

Mr. COLLINS: They are under the Dutch Government.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. You can go there in a fishing boat. Wages there before the war were from 8d. to 1s. per day.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you want that in Queensland?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is close to Australia. Our next neighbour, Japan, has a population of 60,000,000.

Mr. CARTER: What has that to do with the land tax?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say we have neighbours numbering 120,000,000 close to our back door, and our population is only 5,000,000. The hon. gentleman asks what has that to do with the land? What a foolish question to ask. I say that is another reason why we should leave the land as free as possible and leave the people who are on it to produce all the foodstuffs possible, and make it possible for young people to settle on it. The young people are quite right. They will not settle on the land, and they will not accept the conditions with which their fathers have had to put up with. There is

*Mr. Bebbington.]*



no reason why they should, when they can come into the cities and get employment at short hours with twice the pay they could make out of the land. We have to make the conditions of life better. We have to take the conditions of the city, as far as we can, into the country, and relieve the position of loneliness which exists. We have to take the work of our technical colleges more into the country so that we can give the people of the country some refinement and some encouragement in their homes. So long as the Government claim their pound of flesh, so long as they are so extravagant that they have to tax, to the extent of 9d. every man who has ls., we cannot expect people to live on the land. I know of several cases in which, when the Federal land tax is added to the State land tax, the two together have amounted to 75 per cent. of the value of the land.

The TREASURER: You say you can quote cases?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes.

The TREASURER: Will you give me some particulars?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes. I will give the hon. gentleman particulars.

The TREASURER: You gave me some last year, and the information was not correct.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The information which I gave the hon. gentleman was correct. It appears that the State Government will have their pound of flesh, and they ought to be satisfied. The Federal platform of the Labour party proposes to do away with the £5,000 exemption allowed in connection with the Federal land tax and to make all lands taxable. The Treasurer was present at the Labour conference at which that resolution was carried. The report of the proceedings of that conference contains this statement—

“Mr. A. Stewart moved—‘That the existing Federal land tax be amended to provide for the abolition of the present exemption of £5,000.’ His first point was that the exemption had been made only for vote-catching purposes. With the burden of taxation now growing heavier on the people they should consider the question of taxing all lands. He could not understand anybody being opposed to the motion.

“Mr. Grealey seconded. He contended that in the past they had robbed the people of the land and had taxed industry. The taxpayers’ money was being spent in buying back large estates, whereas if this motion had been in operation the owners of that land would have been forced to sell at cheaper rates. If the people created the land values, they had a right to tax those values.

“Mr. Farrell did not think it right to tax holders of small blocks of land. They would have to have an exemption in order to be fair to the small farmer.”

The motion was carried by twenty votes to nine. I believe that the report from which I have quoted is taken from the “Worker.” It was sent to me, and I have thought it desirable to place it before hon. members. I am quite sure that hon. members will see it is necessary that the land tax should be reduced, or should not be applied to lands which are used for food-producing purposes.

[Mr. Bebbington.

The land which is used for food-producing purposes should be kept as free as possible from taxation.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): I have much pleasure in seconding the motion. I do not think any man in this House is more zealous or more hardworking in the interests of the farmers than the hon. member for Drayton. Certainly, this motion should appeal to everyone who has a practical knowledge of the working conditions of the farmers in Queensland to-day. There is no getting away from the fact that, if we want cheap food and prosperity, we must do our utmost to secure a prosperous and contented farming population. The farming industry is the foundation of everything in the way of prosperity, but at the present time we see a marked disinclination on the part of people to go on the land. Farmers’ sons are seeking any other employment than that of farming, and that is not good for the State. The reason for this disinclination to go on the land is largely because the farmer feels that he is particularly singled out for taxation. The farmer has not only to stand the brunt of the risks of his venture, but he is singled out for taxation by both the State and the Federal Governments. Farmers have to pay all the rates required for the maintenance of roads in country districts, and the general public, the proprietors of motor-cars in their tours, etc., use those roads without contributing anything towards the cost of their maintenance. Having regard to these facts, it seems to me that it is rather over the odds to require the farmer to pay another tax on his comparatively small holding—small so far as its primary value is concerned. Yet after the farmer has given years and years of hard work and practised much self-denial in order to improve his farm, he finds that he is singled out for this tax. I am not objecting to a tax upon land which is used for speculative purposes, but I do agree with the hon. member who has moved the motion that, where land is held for productive purposes, it most certainly should be free from taxation. You might just as well tax a carpenter or a blacksmith on his tools of trade as tax a farmer upon his land. As bearing out my contention in this respect, I propose to quote from the “Worker” of the 10th July last, as it contains some interesting remarks on the subject. In the discussion on the motion for the abolition of the present exemption of £5,000 in connection with the Federal land tax, Mr. Farrell, of New South Wales, opposed the motion—

“He said that practical men had demonstrated to State conferences the need for exemption. As well tax the mechanic for his tools as tax the small farmer for the land he held. He preferred a heavier tax on the larger estates if money was needed.”

That supports my view that where land is used for productive purposes it should go free. Another delegate, Mr. Molesworth, of New South Wales—

“thought the motion was going to hit the small farmer. If they carried the motion, they would have to vote against exemptions in the income tax. The small farmers were already taxed by municipal and State Governments. He doubted very much whether they would get the support of the small farmer if the motion was carried.”

Our Acting Premier, Mr. Theodore, was

present at that conference, and he opposed the exemption, because he thought it rather trenched upon his preserves. He wanted the producers to be left entirely in his hands in order that he might impose upon them whatever exactions he pleased. Speaking of the proposed abolition of the exemption, he said—

“That would have a bad effect on the finances of the State. Until alterations were made in the Federal Constitution, this legitimate field of taxation should be left to the States.”

[4.30 p.m.]

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not connecting his remarks at all with the motion.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am talking about land taxation.

The SPEAKER: The motion is not wide enough to allow the hon. member to enter upon a land taxation discussion. If he will read the motion and connect what he has read with it, he will be in order; but he is not attempting to do that. The Federal land tax has nothing to do with this motion.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am supporting the motion because I think that taxation upon productive land is a mistake in the interests of the whole community, and I think that what I have read, so far as you, Sir, have allowed me to read it, shows the intention that is underlying this taxation. We know that at the present time the State and Federal Governments are faced with very heavy deficits. Very heavy burdens are to be imposed upon the community in the future, and it is evident from the Acting Premier's utterances at that conference that he looks upon the land tax as the means by which funds can be found—to use plain English—for all this buying of votes that is taking place at the present time.

The SPEAKER: Order! That is beside the question. The proposal contained in the motion is to do away with the present land tax in certain cases.

Mr. VOWLES: The motion reads, “In order to increase such production.”

The SPEAKER: That is not the motion. The question is the removal or reduction of land tax “in respect to lands used for agriculture and dairying.”

Mr. VOWLES: The object, as set out in the motion, is “in order to increase production.”

The SPEAKER: That is not the motion; that is the object; and that must be connected up with the reduction of the land tax. The Federal land tax on all land has nothing to do with this particular question.

Mr. SWAYNE: The motion reads—

“That, in the opinion of this House, the prosperity of the State of Queensland depends upon increased primary production, and that in order to increase such production, and enable producers to compete in the markets of the world, the application of the Land Tax Act of 1915, in respect to lands used for agriculture and dairying, be either removed or reduced.”

In support of this motion I am showing how the land tax is regarded by politicians as being a convenient source of revenue for the

defraying of all sorts of expenses which are largely brought about by our own bad Government. We know how hard it is to get money for manuring. We know how money is needed for fodder conservation—I think that question has already come up during this discussion. We are told that we ought to go in for silos and grow green crops for filling them, and, again, there comes in the question of the money. So I contend that, so far as the State goes, it should leave the farmer as free as possible from taxation, secure in the knowledge that the more money there is left in his hands the more will be put into production, into the farm, and the more the community at large will benefit. I would like to point out, from a long experience of the farming population of Queensland that, if by any chance the producers have any money, it is put back into the land, into improvements, better stock, and so on. It is a wise policy, it is a good policy, on the part of the State Government to leave the farmer as free as possible from taxation of any kind. I have pointed out that he is discouraged at the present time. He is subject to all kinds of disabilities. He cannot even get his produce transported to market. There are strikes on every hand, all with their effects falling upon him. First of all they are felt by the whole community, but sooner or later they come back on to him, and in the circumstances I contend that it is a wrong thing to tax what we call the tools of production. I have no objection to taxation upon land that is not applied to productive purposes, that is held for speculation and so on, and even—although I am not stressing this point now—I am not arguing against its being placed on property used for distributing purposes, although I would like to point out that in that case the tax is ultimately passed on to the producer. For instance, a property on which is built a large store has a heavy land tax to pay. It is all charged to trade expenses and falls on the producer. It ultimately finds its way to the man who has nobody else upon whom he can pass it. All we are asking for is that farming lands should be exempt, that the farmer should go free, because, as has been pointed out, nearly every other form of taxation imposed on the community ultimately comes back to him. He has to meet it in some form or other. I do not wish to labour this question, because I understand that members opposite view it with favour, and I should really like to see it go to a vote this evening and find how hon. members opposite will vote. We should then ascertain the value of the protestations. I am quite sure the hon. member for Mackay, in view of the large number of farmers in his electorate, will vote for it. I think a very good case has been put up for the resolution, and I have very much pleasure in seconding it.

Mr SMITH (*Mackay*): The hon. member for Drayton never loses an opportunity in this House of dealing with the question of the land tax, and it is rather interesting to note that the motion which he has moved to-day is, word for word, similar to that which he moved last session. A certain portion of it we can all agree with, that is—

“That . . . the prosperity of the State of Queensland depends upon increased primary production.”

One of the great problems confronting every country at the present time is how to

*Mr. Smith.]*

increase production and also how to secure its equitable distribution. It is rather interesting to note that members opposite condemn the land tax lock stock and barrel on every possible occasion. We know that this tax is primarily not a revenue-producing tax at all, looked at from the economic standpoint. Every leading economist of the past and present day recognises that land taxation is the soundest form of taxation that any State Treasurer can place upon the statute-book, and anyone who desires to promote the best interests of the State will recognise that it is directed to bring about an equitable and just land system. We know that the source of all wealth is the result of labour applied to natural resources. To produce prosperity in the community, to increase production, it is necessary to have a just land system, a system whereby a man will be encouraged to go upon the land, whereby land will be made available on equitable terms and where the interests of the State will be conserved in such a way as to prevent land speculation and monopoly arising. The hon. member for Drayton, in the course of his speech, made some very rash statements. We know that at times, owing perhaps to his impetuosity, owing perhaps in some cases to his lack of knowledge, he makes statements which, if taken seriously, are liable to mislead hon. members in this House, and, not only that, but mislead the general public. It is rather interesting to know that last session, in reply to the Treasurer he said that he was prepared to give concrete instances where the Land Tax Act of 1915 was operating harshly on the farmers. He repeated that statement again to-day and made further rash statements. I have here a return handed to me by the Treasurer which deals with concrete cases supplied by the hon. member for Drayton. One of them is as follows:—

“‘A’ put £3,000 into farm three or four years ago; bad seasons came and sold cows; man has not earned breakfast off farm for whole three years. State steps in as first mortgagee for nearly £100, land tax £26 a year, with super tax—£36.”

That was investigated by the Treasurer, and the facts are that the person referred to made no returns under the Land Tax Act until he was found out, and returns for three years were demanded. Up to the end of June last he had not stated his losses for the years 1915, 1916, and 1917, and until he had done so the Commissioner could not go into his case. He only recently made application under section 46 of the Act for a revision, and before the Commissioner knew that the matter had been brought up in the House the tax for 1915 and 1916 was cancelled, and that for 1917 reduced to £16. Consequently the State only assessed him at £16, and not at £100, as stated by the hon. member. Another case which was supplied to the Treasurer, which has as little truth in it as the one quoted, is as follows:—

“‘B’ earned nothing out of farm for twelve months, not one sixpence for his own labour; employed two men, also wife and daughter, lost £30 in interest on mortgage; asked to pay £10 6s. 8d. for land tax.”

This person purchased the land referred to in 1917. He paid land tax for 1917 amounting to £9 11s. 8d. Upon application under section 46 the tax was reduced to £4, and

[*Mr. Smith.*

£5 11s. 8d. was refunded before the Commissioner was aware that the matter had been brought up in the House, or that it was intended to bring it up. Another case is referred to as “Case No. 3.” I have the names in my possession. I do not think it is desirable to mention names, but hon. members can have them if they so desire. Case No. 3 is as follows:—

“This man had small farm, 40 acres; shire valuation, £2,050; Government valuation, £5,320; will have to pay £60 for land tax; cannot make a living out of farm.”

The reply to that is that the land was valued by this man himself in 1915 at £4,759, and in 1916 at £2,963, portion having been sold in the meantime. This value was accepted pending a valuation. In 1917 the land was valued by the Government Valuer at £4,962, and not £5,320 as stated. It will be noted in all cases to which I have referred that the hon. member for Drayton has been guilty of making statements in this House—has been guilty of making statements to the Treasurer—which, on investigation, have been found to be nothing else but pure fabrications calculated to mislead the House and to throw dust in the eyes of the general electors of this State.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Shame!

Mr. SMITH: That is the general policy indulged in by hon. members opposite. They appear to think that the people of this State can be deceived for all time. It is quite possible for anyone, no matter how intelligent he may be, to be misled on certain occasions, believing that public men generally speak the truth; but when we peruse the statements that I have just read, we can only come to the conclusion that the hon. member for Drayton, for purposes best known to himself, desires to mislead this House, the people of his electorate, and the people of Queensland generally. (Interruption by Opposition members.)

Mr. FRY: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in accusing the hon. member for Drayton of wilfully and deliberately misleading this House.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: He has proved it.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Drayton made certain statements, and the hon. member is refuting those statements.

Mr. SMITH: What I have just quoted are from official reports handed to me by the Treasurer, and I will make a further comment on them—

“Mr. Bebbington, M.L.A., promised in two cases (marked ‘A’ and ‘B’ in attached ‘Hansard’) to give names of individuals concerned. He has not done so. The three names given are of cases where he did not specifically promise to give such names; where he did so promise in two cases he has not done so.”

So you see my statement is perfectly correct; that due, perhaps, to his temperament, or perhaps for other reasons, he rises in his place and makes statements which are contrary to the facts.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Why is he out of the House now?

Mr. SMITH: I desire to move an amendment on the motion. (Opposition laughter.)

I move as an amendment—

“That all the words after ‘production,’ where it occurs for the second time, be omitted, with a view to inserting the following:—

It is necessary to bring land speculation to an end by taxing landholders who are withholding land from use, and by scientific organisation of distribution securing to all wealth-producers the full value of their labour.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. SMITH: I pointed out earlier in my speech that, from the standpoint of political economists, the land tax is not a revenue tax; finally, it is a tax calculated to secure an equitable land system, and it is one whereby the State secures for the purposes of the State that value which the community has created. We know that land speculation is rampant in every country in the world to-day. We know that immense fortunes have been made by people speculating in land. We know that wealth is the result of labour applied to natural resources. To uplift and educate society, to provide for the needs of men and women, to provide food, clothing, and shelter for the people, we must have access to land. If that land is held in large areas by individuals, these individuals are able to exert an influence in the community which is detrimental to the best interests of our citizens. To provide for our needs we must have access to land; but, if it is held by private individuals for speculative purposes, you can only have the use of it on the terms which the landowners dictate. Therefore, it means that we live under conditions dictated not by the State but by the land speculators. The hon. member for Drayton referred to the fact that the Government of Great Britain have recognised the need of encouraging increased primary production, and also stated that at the commencement of the war Great Britain was faced with very serious difficulties with regard to its food supplies. We know that that was so, and that agriculture generally was very seriously on the decline for many years in the old country, due to conditions of landowning such as the hon. member and his party desire to see perpetuated in Queensland to-day. Hon. members opposite get quite pathetic and tearful at times when talking about the needs of our primary producers: but everyone knows that the real champions of the wealth producers and the genuine farmers are on this side of the House. (Opposition laughter and dissent.) The hon. members for Drayton and Mirani referred to the farmer and his difficulty in meeting the land tax. They have not in mind the farmer, but the owners of valuable city blocks and land held in suburban areas. Everyone knows that only 9 per cent. of the revenue received from the land tax is paid by the farmers and agriculturists of this State, so I am justified in saying that, when they seek relief from the land tax, they do not want relief for the farmer but for the landjobber and speculator—the men who care nothing for the genuine interests of the people who desire to produce wealth in this State. (Opposition laughter and dissent.) One of the chief effects of the Federal and State land tax up to the present time has been the breaking up of big estates. We know that since the inception of the Federal land tax, which has a very high exemption, a large number of the estates so taxed have

been cut up and withdrawn from the taxable area, thereby showing that the tax is having the economic effect which we claimed for it. We say that land should be held for use. If people are withholding it from use, they are acting against the interests of the community; and the purpose of our land tax proposals is to make it no longer profitable for people to withhold land from its proper use. That is something which hon. members opposite do not agree with; they believe in a system of speculation—of exploitation. If a man purchases a piece of land, recognising that probably the community will grow in a few years, and holds it up, he then practically points a pistol at the community. He says to the people who need that land, “Unless you are prepared to pay the price I demand I will not allow you to use it.” He takes a value from the community which he does not create. What a man has created himself he has an inherent right to; but no one has created the value of the land; it has been created by the needs of the community, and it is just to tax the land for the purpose of carrying on the business of the community. I have some rather interesting figures here dealing with land speculation in Brisbane and the increased land value, and showing how, if a community extends and trade and commerce increase in any particular district, the land increases in value irrespective altogether of anything which the owner may do.

Mr. FRY: Will you give us the amount of the profit made by the Premier and Chief Secretary in their speculations?

Mr. SMITH: Take Smith's corner in Queen and George streets. That was originally sold for £45 5s. The Bank of New South Wales corner in Queen and George streets was sold for £25, and the present value of those allotments is £30,000. It shows that, owing to the increasing population in Brisbane, and the expansion of the city industrially and commercially, the land has increased enormously in value, and the owners are making a huge unearned increment which should by rights have gone to the State. The same thing holds good of the picture show site at the corner of Queen and Albert streets, which was originally sold for £142, and the present value of which is £50,000. The land on which the Australian Hotel stands was originally sold for £40, and the present value is £45,000. The opposite corner was sold for £33 originally, and the present value is £25,000. Finney, Isles' land was sold originally for £22 10s., and the present value is £30,000. Hunter's boot site was £25 originally, and the present value is £25,000. The “Courier” building site was originally sold for £82, and its present value is £55,000. I am not surprised that the “Brisbane Courier” objects to paying the land tax, and it would be well for the people when they read articles in that paper denouncing the land tax, to bear in mind that when the “Courier” people write about the farmers' land tax they have in mind the land tax which they have to pay for their own property. The areas referred to are only 36-perch allotments, and the total value of all the allotments between Albert and Edward streets, on the Finney, Isles' side, was only £240 originally. We see the tremendous values that have been created as a result of the increase of population, and the need for carrying on industries in the State. The same thing holds good with regard to every other city and town in Queensland. We

*Mr. Smith.]*

know that if the people of Brisbane were to leave the city in very large numbers, and there was only one-third of the present population left, these land values would probably fall back two-thirds, but the population is increasing, and as a result the values increase in like proportion. Our taxation is directed to securing for the community the value which the community has created. Another important point, and one which

[5 p.m.] vitally affects the people of this State, is the effect which this speculation in land has in connection with the provision of homes for the people, and in connection with unemployment. We know that values have been forced up by speculators, and we have the result in Brisbane to-day. We have heard members opposite say that there are no slums in Brisbane or in Queensland. One only needs to look to what has been revealed as the result of the recent influenza epidemic. We find that people are living under conditions which are an absolute disgrace to the city of Brisbane. That is entirely due to speculation in land, and the fact that land values have been forced up to such an extent that people have to live on 16-perch allotments; the houses are built close together, in such a way that one can almost hear his next door neighbour changing his mind. (Laughter.) They are compelled to pay such a high price for land that they are able to build only what can be called hovels.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. gentleman in order in discussing town allotments under this motion, which refers to land used for food-producing purposes?

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Mackay has moved an amendment to the motion, and he is speaking to his own amendment.

Mr. VOWLES: I rise to a point of order. It appears to me that we have been getting a lot of evidence of values of land which is in use. The amendment refers to land that is not in use, and proposes that that land should be penalised. The hon. gentleman is talking altogether away from the subject. He is talking generally.

The SPEAKER: If the hon. gentleman is not dealing with unused land, he is certainly not in order. I thought the hon. gentleman raised the question because he did not know that an amendment had been moved. The amendment refers to taxing landowners who are withholding land from use.

Mr. VOWLES: He is talking of used land—the "Courier" building, amongst others.

Mr. SMITH: I am dealing with both the motion and the amendment. I claim that I can deal with the motion and so show the need for the amendment. When I was interrupted by the member for Drayton—

Mr. VOWLES: You were talking about slums.

Mr. SMITH: I was pointing out that in the metropolitan area large areas of land are being held up for speculative purposes. I have quite recently had the opportunity of visiting most of the suburban areas of Brisbane where land is held for speculative purposes. The effect of that is that workers desiring comfortable homes have to pay such high prices to the speculator for that land that they are unable to build homes which

provide for that standard of decency which at least all Labour men and all humanists claim to be necessary.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: My motion did not ask for the removal of the tax on that land.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member refers to his motion. I am dealing with the amendment. The hon. member apparently does not know what the amendment is. The hon. member is so prone to make wild statements himself that he cannot conceive of the possibility of any other hon. member speaking logically and dealing with facts.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are making incorrect statements now. You said you were dealing with both the motion and the amendment, and now you contradict yourself.

Mr. SMITH: Another point in connection with land taxation is that it provides for a larger number of landholders than exists at the present time. We know that one of the chief evils in Great Britain referred to this afternoon is due to the fact that the biggest part of the land is held by private individuals, who are able to dictate the terms upon which the rest of the community shall have the right to use that land. The hon. member for Drayton referred to the fact that primary production had fallen away in Great Britain.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, I did not. That is an absolutely incorrect statement.

Mr. SMITH: I want to point out to the hon. member that until quite recently there was no land tax in Great Britain.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Certainly not.

Mr. SMITH: We find a state of affairs existing there which the hon. member desires to see perpetuated here.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not say that cultivation had fallen away, because it increased during the war.

Mr. SMITH: The effect of land taxation is to bring land into its proper use, and that is the object of my amendment. I want to show the effects of a bad land system in Great Britain and to apply the moral to Queensland. The set of conditions which hon. members opposite stand for gave rise to the situation which now exists in Great Britain. In England, 711 persons own one-quarter of the whole of the land, and 10,000 persons own two-thirds. Twelve persons own one-quarter of Scotland, seventy persons own one-half, and 1,700 own nine-tenths. In Ireland, 144 persons own one-third, 292 persons own one-half, and 1,942 persons own two-thirds. Twelve persons own 5 square miles in the heart of London—the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Westminster, and ten others. So we see that the conditions that have militated against primary production in Great Britain, which have caused unemployment—which is an important primary cause of poverty—are due to the fact that where no decent land tax was in operation the land fell into the hands of a few individuals, and the people had no encouragement to go in for increased primary production. On the other hand, in Queensland we have a system of land taxation which brings land into its proper use, and makes it available, on reasonable terms, to everyone who desires to go on the land. What is the position to-day? We find that land is selling in many cases at a very high price indeed. We know that fruit and sugar land is changing

[Mr. Smith.]

hands at enormous prices. That value is created by the community, and it means that anyone desiring to go in for farming has to face, first of all, a capital cost, which makes it very difficult indeed to get a living. One can recognise that, if a man has to pay £50 or more per acre for land, he has to get a very big return before he has anything at all for himself. If hon. members like the hon. member for Drayton were really in earnest in their desire to assist the farmer, they would do everything in their power to support this party to bring to an end land speculation, and enable the farmers to get land at reasonable rates, so that they would be able to make a decent living for themselves. Another thing that we should consider in connection with high land values is their effect upon employment. We know that, owing to high land values in the Brisbane area and throughout the State of Queensland, men, unless they are pretty fortunate and have a pretty large banking account, are not able to build homes for themselves. The price of the land is prohibitive, and that reacts on employment. Men engaged in the building trade have not that volume of employment which they would have if land were cheaper. It will thus be seen that high land values mean high rents, which have to be paid by the workers, and thereby they increase the cost of living. It is not uncommon at the present time for workers to have to pay away one-third of their whole income for rent.

Another point in my amendment to which I should like to draw attention is the part which relates to "the scientific organisation of distribution, securing to all wealth-producers the full value of their labour." That is a portion of the amendment which every reasonable man should support. We know that at the present time distribution is very badly organised. There are a large number of overhead charges levied by people who are known as middlemen—people who support hon. members opposite, who dictate their policy, and who contribute to their election funds. We know that agricultural science has been brought to such a high degree of perfection that the problem of production is not so great if you have a just land system. The chief thing that Parliament should deal with, after securing scientific production, is the securing of a scientific system of distribution. At the present time the markets are largely controlled by speculators and commission agents. We know that they are able to "rig" the market as it suits them from time to time, so that the price the farmer receives for his commodity often bears no relation at all to the price the consumer has to pay. I am not one of those who talk very much about cheap food. I believe in a fair economic price for every commodity. I think we have no right to get any commodity cheap, if its cheapness depends upon the underpayment of any section of the workers who are engaged in the production of that commodity. So I say the farmer has a right to receive a price for his commodities which will recompense him for his labour in connection with their production. But in between the producer and the consumer we have a class of individuals stepping in who control the market. These people are able at times to create an artificial scarcity of certain commodities. We know that it is quite a common thing in every seaport in the world to find speculators in food destroying commodities,

so that they may be enabled to maintain high prices in the market. We find that in the very year that nature is most bounteous, when we have large supplies of the articles which are essential to human happiness, middlemen, who support hon. members opposite, step in and rob the community. I remember an occasion of this kind some few years ago, when America had a record crop of cotton. The cotton ring in that country, recognising that, if they allowed all of that cotton to go on to the market, prices would fall to such an extent that they would have a difficulty in bringing them back to the normal figure, decided that they would withhold supplies, and in one day they burnt no less than 2,000,000 bales of raw cotton, with the result that many people in all parts of the world were unable, owing to the high prices, to purchase the necessary articles of clothing that they desired. The same thing holds good with regard to everything that is necessary for human wellbeing. Some time ago I received a very interesting statement illustrative of this position. My informant was a farmer at Maroochydore. He sent into the market in Brisbane a certain quantity of bananas, and he saw those bananas sold. The price he received was 2½d. per dozen. He followed the purchaser to his shop, and from him he bought some of the bananas which he had produced himself, and was charged 1s. per dozen for them. Thus we see that between the price the farmer receives and the price the consumer has to pay there is a great disparity. The middleman in this particular case received practically 9d. per dozen for selling those bananas. These speculators serve no useful economic purpose in the community. They may be referred to "as idle drones, gorging themselves to repletion at an industrial feast to which they contribute nothing." With regard to the organisation of distribution, we know that large quantities of fruit go to waste every year as the result of unscientific methods in marketing. We find that to be the case when fruit is most plentiful in the State of Queensland. Pine-apples, oranges, and other fruit would find a ready market in Northern and Western Queensland; but in many cases, no matter what a man is prepared to pay for such fruit, he cannot get it. Therefore, it is necessary to organise distribution, so that we may have a large production of all essential commodities, and may secure to the producer a fair price for his labour, and see that the articles are distributed among the community in a way in which everyone will be served, and in which they will not be asked to pay a greater price than the real value of the commodity. Everyone must recognise the wastefulness of the system. Therefore I have much pleasure in moving the amendment I have indicated.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the forty minutes allowed to him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. LARCOMBE (*Keppel*): I have much pleasure in seconding the amendment. It affirms two things—one that it is necessary to bring land speculation to an end by taxing landowners who are withholding land from cultivation, and the other the principle of the scientific organisation of the agricultural industry. I think that those are two principles which the House ought to affirm. In the first place, elimination of waste from the dairying and agricultural industry is

*Mr. Larcombe.]*

absolutely essential. Efficiency in methods is absolutely necessary. Efficient scientific organisation is governing the world to-day. It is governing large industrial concerns, and it should also govern agriculture. It is rather unfortunate that in Australia particularly scientific methods are not applied to the same degree as they might be. I am frequently reading information as to what is being done in America. Of course, I know that America has a tremendous population as compared with Australia, a tremendous development of industry, and a tremendous capital at her disposal. But at the same time I think that the methods which are being applied in America could, to a very large extent, be applied to Australia, so that the affirmation of the second part of the amendment should be of a unanimous nature. The Government realise their responsibility in connection with the scientific organisation of industry, particularly in relation to dairying and agriculture. In the Governor's Speech you will find mention of Bills aiming at the scientific organisation of the dairying industry, and, if those Bills become law, I feel certain that it will mean a big step forward in the efficient organisation of that industry in Queensland.

Before dealing with the second point, may I be permitted to say a few words on the motion, because I understand it is quite permissible under the Standing Orders for me to discuss both the motion and the amendment at the same time. The hon. member for Drayton, in moving the motion, spoke about silos and gave us a dirge on the drought and spoke in general terms, but he certainly did not support the principle of his motion. He offered no evidence in support of the necessity of removing or reducing the land tax in relation to agricultural and dairying lands. I think his whole speech was directed to a contention which is fundamentally unsound. He was attempting to show that the land tax taxes industry and improvements. That is an unsound assumption. The Land Tax Act does not touch improvements or industry at all. It absolutely prohibits or restricts the Government from imposing any tax upon improvements or industry.

Mr. FRY: He was showing the hardships which the farmers suffer.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, he was showing that, but he attributed those hardships to a cause which to my mind is not the correct cause, that is, the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is only a part of the cause.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The drought is the big factor.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not say the sole cause; it is part of the cause.

Mr. LARCOMBE: How can the hon. member logically say that, when the dairying industry and the agricultural industry are in a better state than ever before in our history?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On account of war prices.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The argument first is that the industry is going back, and, when we are prepared to refute that argument, we are told that it is in a flourishing condition, not due to Labour rule, but because of war prices.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: People are leaving the land; they will not stay on it.

[Mr. Larcombe.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I shall show that people are not leaving the land to-day as compared with previous years when the Denham Government had control. The hon. member went in for a eulogy of the Federal Government. How have they treated the producer? I have here a letter in reply to an inquiry of mine for some information. It is signed by Mr. Massy Greene. I asked if the money received by the Federal Government in the rabbit industry was all paid back to the rabbitier, and this is his reply—

"A profit of, approximately, £250,000 was realised by the Government from its transactions in rabbit skins.

"The profits were not handed back to the rabbitiers."

Is that not a scandalous bit of profiteering by the Federal Government—by the Federal branch of the Tory party? Here that same party talk about fair conditions for the producer and giving him the reward of his industry, and they have actually made a quarter of a million out of the rabbitiers and refuse to hand it back to the man on the land. How can a man seriously rise in this House and condemn Labour when he finds a Liberal Government is doing that? No other Government in any other part of the world would stoop to such a thing as that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What did you do with the money you made out of the cattle embargo?

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is trying to draw a comparison where no parallel exists. Let me deal briefly with the second portion of the amendment. The first part—that it is necessary to bring land speculation to an end—seems to be a self-evident proposition. It is fundamentally sound.

Mr. MORGAN: Why not give an opportunity for an expression of an opinion on both the amendment and the motion?

Mr. LARCOMBE: We will get an expression of opinion on them when the vote is taken.

Mr. MORGAN: A man may wish to vote for both the motion and the amendment.

Mr. LARCOMBE: He can vote for the amendment first and the motion afterwards. The amendment becomes a motion. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: The amendment is a direct negative.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Oh! no. I say that it is a crime against society that land should be allowed to be held in large areas right on a railway line.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We know it is.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Well, if the hon. member thinks it is, why does he affirm the principle that the land tax is pernicious and injurious in its effect? It seems to me that the hon. member requires to read a primer—an A B C. of economics and agriculture—because he absolutely ignores the most elementary principles of both. We have heard a great deal lately about increased railway freights. If all the land along the railway lines were cultivated and the produce were coming along those lines, look at the tremendously improved position there would be. Our railway lines, instead of

showing deficits, would show handsome profits.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If it paid to cultivate them, they would be cultivated; but it does not pay.

Mr. LARCOMBE: We want to make it pay, and it will pay if this amendment is carried, and we have a scientific application of the principle. Take the returned soldier problem. Are we going to be successful in dealing with it by allowing land monopoly to continue in Australia? We want to make the land available, and to build up secondary industries. To-day the genius of the Federal Administration in the matter of repatriation has risen only to the height of pushing one man out of a job to put another man in. That is not the policy of Labour. We want to give every returned soldier a job, and every other citizen a job also; and, unless we have the land available, and that land along the lines cultivated, we are not going to do that. If you have that, then your secondary industries will spring up almost as a natural sequence.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You cannot cultivate land unless it will produce sufficient to pay a proper wage.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am pointing out that, by scientific taxation and the forcing of land into the market, we shall be able to do that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is too dogmatic.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I know, as I have to pay the land tax.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Because the hon. member has to pay the tax he makes a personal matter of it. Instead of giving to it a comprehensive consideration, he [5.30 p.m.] is giving to it consideration purely from an individual point of view. The question of unemployment referred to by the hon. member can only be solved by forcing these undeveloped lands into use, and giving the people who desire to go upon them an opportunity of so doing.

Mr. VOWLES: What is the difference between scientific taxation and confiscation?

Mr. LARCOMBE: There is a fundamental difference. The taxation proposals of the present Administration are scientific—

Mr. BEBBINGTON: With a view to confiscation.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Confiscation is profiteering, and the taking from the workers of their weekly wages.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is only confiscation of one thing. You want to confiscate everything.

Mr. LARCOMBE: This Government are not prepared to confiscate anything. Let me point out how this problem of land cultivation was dealt with centuries ago.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Deal with the present, and let past centuries go.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It is a pity that the hon. member does not study history. The hon. member has no love for history at all. Take Carlyle.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Let Carlyle alone; he is dead. (Laughter.) He never cultivated any land.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am prepared to wager that the hon. member does not know who Carlyle was. (Laughter.) I want to point out that Carlyle laid down what, to my mind, is a very sound axiom. He said, "The best way to judge the future is by the past." Now, I wish to quote what was done centuries ago in order to make men cultivate their land. Professor Freeman points out that we can go forward frequently by going back. Now, let us go back to the old Mosaic law in this respect.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I thought the hon. member did not know anything about the present.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member knows very little, if anything, of the present, and he knows nothing at all of the past. Why cannot the hon. member discuss the matter calmly and fairly? Why make a personal matter of it? I gave him a fair opportunity. He never once touched his motion during the whole afternoon, and I never said a word. The hon. member says he has no regard for the past, but let him just consider these two sections of the Mosaic law—

"Section 42. If a man take a field to farm, and grows no corn on the field, he shall be accused of neglecting to work the field; and he shall give to the lord of the field an amount of corn according to the yield of the district.

"Section 43. If he has not cultivated the field, but has let it lie fallow, he shall give corn like its neighbour to the lord of the field. And the field that lay fallow he shall hoe and sow, and to the lord of the field restore it."

That was a very severe penalty in order to compel men to cultivate their lands and to prevent them laying it up, and we could not do better than act on Professor Freeman's axiom—go back to the past and compel the people to do the same to-day.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Take members of Parliament first and give them some experience.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member frequently speaks in very contemptuous terms of members of Parliament. If he thinks so much of life on the land, why did he come away from it? Why is he here?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: To give you the benefit of my experience.

Mr. CORSER: He is sacrificing himself for the farmers.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hear! hear! (Laughter.)

Mr. LARCOMBE: It has been said that the burden of land taxation has been a crushing one, and that men have been driven off the land. What are the facts? If we look up the land tax returns, we find that the number of taxpayers who paid from 4½d. to 6d. in the £1 was the same for the first year of the tax as that given in the last report. That shows that those who paid a tax of from 4½d. to 6d. have not subdivided their estates. Therefore the tax cannot have affected them. We must impose such a tax as will compel those owners of large estates to subdivide their estates and let the returned soldiers get the land and cultivate it. The tax on undeveloped land produced only £14,000 last year. The taxable value of the land was returned as £43,000,000, and yet we only got £14,000 from the undeveloped land tax. I think, therefore, that that tax is too low, and that it should be increased in order to compel the owners to cultivate their land.

*Mr. Larcombe.]*



The advocacy of this tax is not restricted to Labour members, and I want to give the hon. member for Drayton what his own former leader, Hon. D. F. Denham, said.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He never cultivated any land.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It is very ungrateful on the part of the hon. member to repudiate his old leader. The Hon. D. F. Denham, in speaking on this question, said—

“One of the greatest misfortunes in our agricultural country, which has to depend upon its primary producers, is land speculation, or that the best of our land should be locked up in the hands of those who hope to reap an unearned increment.

“This Bill will tend to break up some of the large estates, and the sooner they are broken up and settled with a population the better.”

That is a sentiment that we can all endorse as sound policy. One would think he was reading from the speech of a Labour member.

Mr. MORGAN: That was not to be confiscation.

Mr. LARCOMBE: By exactly the same means as we propose.

Mr. VOWLES: There was no special land tax in those days.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Mr. Denham was attempting to pass through this Assembly a Land Betterment Assessment Bill which was fundamentally a Land Tax Bill. The Bill certainly did not come into operation, but those were the sentiments expressed by Mr. Denham in 1904. Unfortunately, that measure was defeated, and it was left to the Labour Government to come along and apply the principles of a tax that Mr. Denham then supported. We should increase the undeveloped land tax on the large estates and thereby secure the economical reform we desire—that is, the subdivision of estates and making the land available. It must be borne in mind that, when we imposed this land tax, we also repealed the Railways (Guarantee) Act, which relieved agriculturists of an indebtedness of £250,000 and a constantly recurring debt under that Act.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: £250,000 was the amount due.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It was £250,000, and there was a constantly recurring indebtedness which would have had to be met.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This year you took £578,000 from landowners.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Even if we did take that amount, it was community-created and has not injured anyone. The motion says that it is necessary to reduce or abolish the land tax in relation to cultivated land in order to stimulate the prosperity of Queensland. I gave some figures on the Address in Reply which showed overwhelmingly that during the time the Land Tax Act has been in operation there has been prosperity previously unparalleled in the history of the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Due to war prices.

Mr. LARCOMBE: No; not war prices.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: War prices are the cause of the inflated values.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member is quite wrong. If he looks at the grazing,

[Mr. Larcombe.

agricultural, and other returns, he will find that the tax is justified from every point of view. With regard to the stock argument about war prices, it must be remembered that there were thousands of men away from Queensland during the war, and therefore agriculture has been, to a certain extent, neglected; still, there has been progress. I would like to know if it is a fair thing to ask whether this tax hits the small agriculturists or farmers?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It all depends on what you call a small farmer. If he is a man living on 10 or 20 acres, it may not, because a man cannot live on that.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I want to answer that question, not in my own words, but from the “Trustees’ Review.” It says—

“To put the case another way, more than one-half of those liable to pay this tax are mulcted in the trivial sum of an average of 16s. 8d. per capita per annum, whilst fourteen taxpayers pay an average of nearly £3,000 per capita annually.”

That is the complaint of the “Trustees’ Review”—that more than half those who pay the tax are only liable to pay 16s. 8d., while fourteen persons are liable to pay £3,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am dealing with men who own perhaps 600 or 700 acres—the men who produce our exports.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member seems to ignore the fact that there are certain provisions in our Land Tax Act which enable the Government to remit the tax if a hardship is imposed, and we have done that.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I did not ignore it; I mentioned section 46.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The hon. member passed it by with very brief reference. He said that there were many agriculturists who did not know that that section existed. I think the amount last year remitted under that section was somewhere about £4,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There will be more this year.

Mr. LARCOMBE: We know that under the Income Tax Act a farmer can deduct in his income tax return the amount of the land tax which he has paid. Let me give a few figures as evidence that the land tax is fair and equitable. In 1917-18, after the tax had been in operation some years, the number of ratepayers in Queensland increased from 20,000 to 25,000, and the total value of land subject to taxation from £31,000,000 to £34,000,000 as compared with 1915-16.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The land is valued too high.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Those figures show that there is no unfairness or harshness, and that the tax is equitable and fair. There is material prosperity in the State, as the banking returns show. In fact, we cannot keep down the number of taxpayers nor the value of land, which keeps bounding up as the result of the policy of the present Administration.

Mr. CORSER: That is against your policy—it cannot cut both ways. You say you want to reduce the value of land.

Mr. LARCOMBE: It is not against our policy. The policy is sound, but the result has not been what it might be.

Let me refer briefly to the question of

land settlement. I give the following figures with regard to applications accepted for selections for a period of four years:—

Year.	No.
1911 ... ..	2,046
1912 ... ..	1,717
1913 ... ..	1,477
1914 ... ..	1,554

We find what one might term a statistical decrescendo. There was a constant decrease for four years prior to the Labour party coming into office. Land settlement was going back all the time, according to that return. Why was a more progressive policy not adopted by our past Governments during the last half-century? If there were such grand possibilities of increase in land settlement and agriculture or production, why was it not brought about by our opponents? The onus has been thrown upon Labour to improve the agricultural and dairying conditions of this State. When in opposition, I read an article from the "Agricultural Review," which pointed out that the Agricultural Department in Queensland, during that time, was the worst administered department in the world.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It has always been the same in that department.

Mr. LARCOMBE: The soundness of our Land Tax Act will be shown by the following figures. Taking the holdings and the area cultivated from 1914 to 1918 there were 24,828, and in 1917-18 there were 25,872. The value of agricultural crops in 1916 was £6,000,000, and in 1917 it was £7,300,000, or an increase of £1,300,000. The butter production from 1914 to 1918 was 37,230,000 lb., and in 1917-18 it was 38,950,000 lb. The cheese production for the four years from 1914 to 1918 was 951,000 lb., while in 1917-18 it was 11,142,000 lb.

Mr. MORGAN: Was not 1914 a drought year? Why do you not state that, and be fair?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I do not want to quote any figures that can be successfully challenged by hon. members opposite. I am perfectly fair.

Mr. MORGAN: You are taking the bad years against the good.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Taking four years under the Labour Government, and comparing them with four years of any previous Government, the figures are substantially in our favour. I have the figures for the area under crop for that period. I will not give the detailed figures, but merely the total. The area under crop for the period of four years from 1911 to 1914 under our opponents' rule was 2,835,253 acres, while in the four years of the Labour Government from 1915 to 1918 it was 2,868,304 acres, or an increase of 33,000 acres in favour of Labour rule, in spite of drought. I would like to deal now with the dairying establishment, exclusive of factories. In 1915 the value of the dairying industry in Queensland was £2,040,000, while in 1917 the value had increased to £3,400,000—an increase of £1,360,000. There are a good many things which require emphasising.

Mr. VOWLES: Say it over and over and over again.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Yes, as the Premier said. I recollect that Matthew Arnold, when

replying to a critic, once said, "If he continues to repeat a certain argument I shall refuse to continue to notice it." Hon. members opposite are so stock-like in their arguments that it would be unnecessary to combat them but for the fact that, if we did not refute them, they would go forth to the people as true. I am concerned about the electors of Keppel. They might read the speech of the hon. member for Drayton and believe him, only for the reply I am making, which I will circulate amongst them. At the last election, during the short time I was able to be in the electorate, I gave an account of my stewardship. I referred to the land tax and other legislation placed on the statute-book by this Government, and what did the people say? "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter once more into the glory of heaven." (Laughter.) I think the figures I have given show eloquently, comprehensively, and conclusively that the Land Tax Act has been a splendid reform, that it has stimulated land settlement and agriculture, and has brought about general prosperity, and there is no justification for supporting the motion moved by the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is in theory, but not in practice.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I will admit there has been one decrease under a Labour Government—and I am speaking now of agriculture and not of education. The number of goats has decreased under a Labour Government. (Loud laughter.) I want to be quite fair and give all the returns. In 1914 there were 134,000 goats in Queensland. After three years of Labour rule they had gone down to 129,000. (Renewed laughter.) I would like to give a few reasons, in a general sense, in support of the tax. The land tax, to use a paradox, is the only tax that is not a tax. It is only taking for the community the community-made value. Surely that is a sound proposition that might be accepted by even hon. members opposite.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not a tax to those who do not pay it, like you. Others have to pay.

Mr. LARCOMBE: I find, according to the last return, that we have appropriated—although we have not quite spent—£43,000,000 for railways and £2,775,000 for immigration, while we have spent £913,000 upon roads and bridges. The expenditure of that money has tremendously increased the value of lands in Queensland. Had it not been for that expenditure, the land would not have any population, and without population it would not have any value. So, in taking the community-improved value, the Government are acting upon the soundest principles of political economy. Let me remind the hon. member for Drayton what his own people have to say upon this particular question. Dealing with the object of the Land Betterment Assessment Bill, the Hon. D. F. Denham said—

"The object of the Bill is to conserve the interests of the primary producers and to provide cheaper land. Under the Bill the farmer is a great gainer. One feature of the Bill that commends itself to my judgment is that it checks speculation.

"Hon. E. B. Forrest: Is that desirable?"

*Mr. Larcombe.]*

"Hon. D. F. DENHAM: Yes, when we deal with land it is eminently desirable."

I think that that quotation from the speech of the Hon. D. F. Denham, who was then Premier of the State, is a very strong endorsement of Labour's policy, and a very strong buttress of the Land Tax Act.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Mr. Denham is not a farmer.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That is a stock argument. Let us carry it to its logical conclusion. If that principle held good, the hon. member for Drayton should not have any voice in any matters that did not affect agriculture. What right has the hon. member to talk about mining or any other subject?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have no experience in mining, and I never speak on mining.

Mr. LARCOMBE: Any intelligent member of this party, although he is not a practical farmer, if he hears arguments and has before him statistics, can realise whether the tax has been prejudicial or otherwise. Take Mr. Justice Higgins. He has not been connected with certain industries, and yet he makes awards based upon the evidence given by practical men for these industries. I have gone round with the Public Works Commission and heard the evidence of practical men, and I have been enabled to get a better idea of the conditions of land settlement, agriculture, mining, and other industries in this State. (Hear, hear!) I think I am as competent to form a judgment on this question as is the hon. member for Drayton, although I have not been actually on the land. It is, perhaps, a terminological inexactitude to say that I have not been on the land. I was on the land for one day, and it is quite enough for me. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I believe that—quite enough.

Mr. LARCOMBE: That was under a Tory Administration. The conditions were so abominable that I was prepared to let somebody else take up the land. Under the beneficent Labour rule we now have I would be pleased to take up land, and do the best I could. I want to deal with the question of the New Zealand land tax. They got £1,500,000 in taxation there, and prosperity reigned in New Zealand up to the inception of the war and conscription. In other States we find a land tax has been imposed, and large sums of money have been raised, and yet there has been no falling off in agriculture or grazing. Therefore, our opponents are not correct when they blame us for the imposition of land taxation in Australia. We are in Queensland simply following the policy laid down by our opponents in Tasmania, and in other States of Australia. Our opponents attack the Land Tax Act and industrial legislation. But they do not attack the real cause of the retardation of agriculture, grazing, and wealth production—high freights, the Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly, and such combinations as those—stock arguments, it is true, but, nevertheless, correct.

Mr. CORSER: There is no Colonial Sugar Refining monopoly to-day.

Mr. LARCOMBE: We have brought in legislation which has given the cane farmer for his cane a better price than he has hitherto enjoyed in the history of the State.

[Mr. Larcombe.

Then there has been profiteering in the matter of freights. I find that the Adelaide Steamship Company, Huddart Parker, and Company, and the Union Steamship Company largely increased their undistributed profits and reserves during the currency of the war. These increases were secured by substantial rises in freights. The farmer is being handicapped by high freights, by the high prices for machinery, by wheat rings, and other combinations. The prices of wire, iron, and the necessities the farmer uses—those are the things that are retarding wealth production in the State. We find, according to the Interstate Commission's report dealing with the question of wealth production, that in Melbourne big combinations have actually been paying rents for certain workshops to keep them idle, so that they might be able to keep down production, and keep up the prices.

Mr. CORSER: Why blame the Opposition for all this?

Mr. LARCOMBE: I am blaming them because they never attack the profiteer. They never attempt to ascertain the real causes, but blame the poor industrial worker.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted his time.

(At 7 o'clock, the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.)

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): I should like to make a few comments on the Address in Reply before it goes through. At the outset I may say, that I am not one of those who think that the discussion of the Address in Reply is a waste of time. Like many other institutions, it has served a useful purpose. It has afforded members an opportunity of speaking on a variety of subjects which they could not discuss on any other occasion. It is true that a privilege may be abused, but I think this privilege is one which has served a very useful purpose. I do not agree with hon. members who characterise the debate on the Address in Reply as a waste of time, who denounce the Address in Reply, and who immediately take up the maximum time allowed by the Standing Orders. That is an inconsistency which to me is incomprehensible. However, I am glad to have the opportunity of making a few remarks on this occasion. I have listened very carefully to the criticisms of the Opposition on the Government programme as set out in the opening Speech of His Excellency the Governor, and I must certainly say that, if their criticisms are a fair sample of what we are to have on the Address in Reply, nobody need lose very much sleep on their account. Even the leader of the Opposition, who usually is fairly keen and fairly stringent in his criticisms, made a feeble attempt in his effort to criticise the legislation and administration of the Government. There was one rather remarkable statement at the close of his speech, where he said that Ministers were getting away from a sinking ship in order to get out of the wet. As a rule, if a man gets out of a sinking ship he gets into the wet. I do not think that statement could

have been very well thought out. The members of the Opposition are in the wet, and they are likely to remain in the wet for a very long time to come unless there is a wonderful change in public opinion, which does not appear very probable at the present time. At any rate, members who sit on the front Opposition benches who have addressed the House, thinking that they had something with which to trounce the Government, have got into the wet and into the mud. One hon. member threw mud about. The hon. member for Bulimba thought he had the Treasurer tied up in a knot, but he tied himself in a knot, as he recognised immediately the facts were placed before him. We know that when persons are giving evidence in a court of justice they are told that they must speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, and I think that injunction should apply to members of this House. If we are to have nothing better from the front Opposition bench than we have heard up to the present time, nobody need be very much alarmed. The mover of the Address in Reply, as well as the seconder of the motion, but more particularly the mover, made sane, sensible, and sober speeches. The speech made by the mover of the motion was well considered.

Among the criticisms which we have had from the front Opposition bench there was one with reference to the peace terms. The hon. member for Toowong stated that, in view of the struggle the Empire had gone through, and in view of the fact that the war was now over, the peace treaty might be accepted without comment. I dissent from that statement, because I hold that in every assembly of men where they think things out for themselves, and where they have followed the steps which have been taken to bring about the peace treaty, they have a perfect right—indeed, it is practically their duty—to express their convictions on the matter.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Would you have liked the acceptance of the peace treaty delayed until you had an opportunity of speaking upon it?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: No. To all intents and purposes the peace treaty has been assented to, though it has not been finally disposed of. I wish to draw the attention of hon. members to a statement made by President Wilson, who has a right to be heard on this particular matter. President Wilson, in his much-quoted speech at Mount Vernon, said—

“The settlement of every question, whether of territory or of sovereignty, of economic arrangements or of political relationship, shall be made upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its exterior influence or mastery.”

I ask any thoughtful and candid individual whether the settlement has been made on that basis or not? Everyone knows that it has not been made on that basis, and I think it is unfortunate that it has not been made on that basis. I know that some members sitting on the Opposition benches want to starve the German people, and to do a whole lot of other things. Personally, I am

not concerned about the Germans, but I would remind hon. members that it is a tradition of the British nation to deal generously and fairly with a conquered foe after they have fought against him very strenuously and determinedly. I believe the same thing would have occurred on this occasion if the British people had had the decision of the matter in their own hands, but other people had a say in it, and to some extent they have thwarted their efforts in the matter. For that reason I certainly think there are some things about the peace treaty that are just a little bit disconcerting. I am primarily concerned with the effect that it is going to have on the future. There are members sitting opposite who say that from time immemorial it has been the rule to settle disputes by force—that is, by appeals to arms, and that that is going to continue for ever. I do not believe it. I am optimistic enough to think that the time will come when even in international affairs we shall find a better and a simpler and a more equitable way of settling disputes. There was a time when practically every dispute between individuals had to be settled by a duel; but men came to the common-sense view that there were easier and quicker and certainly more satisfactory methods, and the consequence is that duelling has entirely gone out of fashion—in the British Empire, at any rate, much to the credit of Britain—and if some individuals do sometimes settle their differences with their fists in a summary manner, it is a much more satisfactory way than by that of being shot. I am certainly of the opinion that the kind of thing that we have been experiencing during the last five years will not go on for ever. It may continue for some time, but I believe that eventually human nature will cry out, and human nature, like most other things in nature, can be trained with a little trouble and a little industry. It is quite clear that the people who took part in settling the peace conditions got a long way from the proposals laid down by President Wilson, for the simple reason that they thought it was necessary for their own safety and in their own interests to settle those conditions in such a way that difficulties would not be likely to arise again. And yet, is it not a fact that the Germans in 1871 thought they were settling the war with France in such a way that she would never rise again? And does not everyone admit now that they then sowed the seed the harvest of which they have been reaping during the past four years, although the conditions which they imposed and the difficulties they placed in the way of France's recovering and taking her place amongst the nations of the world were such that nobody—or very few persons—thought France would ever recover? The harvest has been a bitter one, and it does seem a pity that we should take the risk of sowing the seed of a similar harvest which we or our children may reap in the future. The point is that we are told that, although the war is over and the peace treaty has been signed, the next thing we have got to do is to settle down and prepare for the next one. If it is so, it is a very sorry state of affairs. If that is the only outlook for the nations after five years of war, it is quite plain that civilisation is going to be wiped off the face of the earth. I believe that there is a better way out of it than that, and I am optimistic enough to think that a better way will be found. If not, it

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

means that the burdens placed on the backs of the people as a result of the past war and the burdens involved in preparing for the next war will certainly crush the life out of every nation on the earth. (Hear, hear!) I am frankly of the opinion that if the League of Nations comes into existence, one of its first duties and one of the first things it will do will be to modify some of the conditions imposed; and if it does that and no more, it will render conspicuous service to humanity, and earn for itself the everlasting thanks of the nations of the earth. If it does not, I still have another hope—that is, a league of the common people—a league of the rank and file of all the nations of the world, who will certainly have something to say, and will certainly do something more than they have done up to the present time. So I am not without hope. "Hope springs eternal in the human breast," and I think it is a comforting hope that is expressed in the Speech in that direction. I am satisfied that, if the jingoes and the powers that be in the various countries do not do something, the people of the various countries and nationalities will do something in that direction. My reason for thinking so is that they can see that, although the armistice was consummated on the basis of the fourteen points laid down by President Wilson, immediately the allies got the opportunity—immediately they got to be top dog—the selfish interests and instincts of each and every one of them began to show themselves. And amongst them were some for whom we have had a great deal of sympathy. When the German steamroller went over Roumania, I am certain that everyone sympathised with her, and regretted that her fate was so hard and harsh, and yet at the present time she is practically ignoring her allies and taking a course which she thinks is best for herself, but which will, in all probability, prove to be just the very reverse. I believe that the people will do something to prevent that sort of thing, and my reason for thinking so is that the people at the present time, who have been in the midst of the maelstrom and who have known a great deal about it—the British working men—are beginning to ask other people a few questions. During the course of the investigations of the Coal Commission in Great Britain, some of the lords and other persons who draw large rent rolls from land from the people were asked, in all probability, some of the most pointed and pertinent questions they were ever asked in their lives, and in their answers they cut quite a sorry figure. Probably it was the first time they had been in the witness-box; and to be in the witness-box and to be examined by an individual whom, under ordinary circumstances, they would regard with contempt, but who evidently had a deep and true knowledge of what had taken place in the past and was taking place in the present, must have been such an experience that I am sure a good many, if not all of them, were glad when they got out of the witness-box; and the revelations that were made in connection with that coal commission of the conditions under which men lived and moved and had their being, brought up their families, and under which their fathers died and went to the place appointed for them, revealed a state of things almost incredible. I know the conditions that existed in a great many of those mining districts thirty years ago, and I scarcely thought that thirty years

[*Mr. Winstanley.*

could go by with so little change as has taken place in those localities. It is a well-known fact—it is admitted now, because it has been established beyond repudiation—that some of the men who went away to fight for their country and for their hearths and homes, lived in homes that were not fit for dog kennels.

Mr. KIRWAN: Not as good as dog kennels.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Some dog kennels are much better, and it is a disgrace that a country that is so rich as Great Britain should have its people housed in such buildings, and existing under such conditions. It is not much wonder that they were told that they could not run an Al nation with a "C3" population. It is not the fault of the people themselves, but the fault of the surroundings in which they live; and for this reason these people have been asking some very pointed and some very pertinent questions. Promises were made to them when they went away, and they are now asking for the fulfilment of those promises. When they get an increase in wages of a few shillings a week they find that not only is that increase passed on to the consumer, but a fairly solid profit is passed on also. The consequence is that they have been using some rather strong means to assert their power and influence in this direction. It is an admitted fact that perhaps never before in the history of the world was the spirit of unrest, the spirit of discontent, and the spirit of dissatisfaction so prevalent as it is at the present time. Hon. members sitting opposite are trying to convey the idea to the people of this State that the unrest in Queensland is due to the fact that there is a Labour Government in power. If discontent, dissatisfaction, and unrest were greater here than in other countries, there might be something in their argument; but as a matter of absolute fact this unrest is world-wide. There is no nation at the present time, either east or west, that is free from it, and the consequence is that everywhere everybody is suffering to a greater or lesser extent.

Mr. MULLAN: It is so even in Japan.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Japan is no exception to the common rule. I can safely say, without fear of contradiction, whether we look at it from a Commonwealth view or whether we take a wider purview of it, that there is less unrest and less dissatisfaction at the present day in Queensland, where there is a Labour Government in power, than there is in any other State or in any other country, whatever kind of Government they may have, or however they may be governed. I certainly think the Labour Government of Queensland, with all their faults and failings, is to be congratulated that under such extraordinary and such abnormal conditions as have prevailed since they have been in power, things are as good as they are. I certainly think that one of the causes of this unrest is the fact that, while men have been getting increases in their wages, they find that they are very little, if any better off, than they were previously. Wages have been increased, but prices have been increased also; and they are beginning to find out, perhaps by the only way that working men do find things out—that is, by bitter experience, that money wages and real wages are two entirely different things; that it is not only a question of how many shillings or how many pounds they may get in the shape of wages at the end of the month or

the end of the fortnight, as the case may be, but what those shillings or those pounds will purchase in the shape of food, clothing, and shelter. They are beginning to ask how it happens that, after all they have suffered, and after all the sacrifices they have made, that they should receive so little recompense for their labour. I know hon. members opposite say that there is no such thing as profiteering. There are none so blind as those who won't see.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We did not say so.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: If a man cannot see that profiteering is going on at the present, well, he is blind, and blind indeed.

Mr. VOWLES: Who said that?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It has been said by members opposite. I know one hon. member said that, if there were profiteering here, he was out to fight them. As a matter of fact it has been said by others that there were no profiteers, and that the profits made at the present time are only normal. Anybody who takes the trouble to look around must be forced to come to the conclusion that abnormal profits have been made, and that, while the workers of the civilised world have been in the battlefield fighting the battles of their respective countries, some of the people left at home have been levying blackmail on others who stayed at home also. About that, there is no question. I certainly think this is one factor in bringing about present unrest; but I do not think it is the only factor. There is something deeper and something wider—something, perhaps, of more importance than either wages or conditions in connection with the industrial unrest which exists at the present time. Men are beginning to feel that for too long they have been regarded as part and parcel of the machines that they work; that they have been regarded as mere hands from whom must be obtained the greatest amount of wealth possible—and that they have received nothing like an equitable share of what they produce. The consequence is that they are beginning to feel, and to express their feelings as well as they can. They say that they must have a greater interest in the industries in which they are engaged than they have had up to the present time. A Labour leader in England, speaking quite recently on this subject, divided it up into six different divisions; and it would be a very easy matter for me to develop those six divisions and make a speech on them, which would take all the time allotted to me at the present time; but it seems to me that it would be well worth while just to give the headings themselves for other people to see, and for other people to study. He said—

“Six principles had been laid down, which provided a sound basis of industrial unity; (1) Autocracy in both Government and industry is dead.”

Well, if it is dead in government, it certainly is not dead in industry, but I hope it is dying. I certainly think industry is going to be democratised, and that those who are engaged in industry are going to have a better interest in it than they have at the present time.

“Some means of studying the psychology of the men concerned and of infusing into industry both soul and humanity must be found.”

It is practically admitted that there is not

much soul, that there is not much humanity, in industry at the present time. It is a trite saying, particularly in connection with limited liability companies, that they have neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned. I know there are exceptions to every rule, but it does seem to me that they never seem to think that their work people have got souls, or that there is anything human about them. They are regarded as part and parcel of the producing machinery, and must be got to produce the maximum amount for the minimum amount of pay.

“Any industry worth carrying on should provide for the decent necessities of those employed in it and something over those necessities.”

That is particularly apropos at the present time when the question of accommodation for seamen is so prominent. I do not think anyone who has travelled at all on the sea would stand up and say that the accommodation provided in the bulk of either ocean-going ships or coastal ships is anything like adequate, or anything like fit for human beings. He goes on to say—

“Any problem which in the past was considered as belonging to one side only must in the future be considered by both sides, and both sides must view it from the same side of the table at the same time. The employers must recognise that in the past the employed got nothing but what they forced by fighting, and are therefore extremely suspicious of any movement on the part of the employers that seeks to deal with them in a more liberal spirit.

“The employed must recognise that, if they are to take any part in the policy and control of industry, they must also take some of its responsibility not of necessity financial, and must stop sitting on the fence. They must also equip themselves for such responsibilities.”

I think, as far as the old country is concerned, that the workers have shown, and have shown very conclusively and very distinctly, that they can equip themselves, and that they can look after industries if they only got the chance. One, perhaps, striking example in that connection is the institution known as the co-operative society in the old country—an institution controlled and managed exclusively by working men and women—an institution which has been built up by them, and which had a turnover of something like £120,000,000 per annum just previous to the war—which pays dividends to the people who are interested in it as well as doing an exceptionally fine amount of educational work and propaganda work, and which, at the recent election returned some of its members to Parliament there to advocate the principles of co-operation. In this connection I think that the workers have good grounds for the stand which they

[7.30 p.m.] have taken, and for insisting, as I hope they will continue to insist, on having a bigger say in the industries in which they are engaged.

The Governor's Speech has something to say with regard to profiteering. It is something which I think needed to be said; it is very timely, and its truth has been proved. There is no question that profiteers have been at work. A prominent politician some years

*Mr. Winstanley.]*

ago, in talking about this class of people, used the following words about them:—

“Whose God is their greed, whose devil is their need, and whose heaven is to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market.”

There is not the slightest doubt about that. As evidence of what has been taking place in the old countries of the world and in Australia, I wish to make one or two quotations. In the course of a recent speech in Glasgow, the Prime Minister, Mr. Lloyd George, drew a distinction betwixt the making of legitimate profits and profiteering, and gave expression to very severe remarks regarding the latter. He said—

“The profiteers, however, do not mind platform attacks nor newspaper attacks; the only form of treatment they have any real respect for is the imposition of stiff taxes on their profits.

#### “CAPATILIST INTERESTS ENRICHED.

“It is admitted that nothing has created deeper unrest among the industrial population than the fact that capitalistic interests have been enormously enriched by the war. On the whole they have not only preserved the level of profits attained previous to the war, but in a great number of instances war profits have exceeded their peace profits by immense amounts.

“It is notorious that there have been speculation and gambling in supplies. Not even the food of the civilian population has been free from the activities of the exploiters. The submarine menace of the enemy outside the realm has only strengthened the grip of speculators posing as patriots inside. The effect of the British navy clearing the seas of enemy shipping is well known; it is writ large in the balance-sheets of practically every shipping company. Owing to the fact that the Government took over only part of the merchant service at guaranteed and adequate rates agreed on by the shipowners themselves, and left free other vessels, merchants, and traders, competed for the freight to an excessive extent.”

An hon. member opposite stated last night that shipowners had not put the freights up—that the rates of freight were the same now as in pre-war times.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: On the coast, I said.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The Admiralty took over, practically at the shipowners terms, the ships that were levying as much freight as they could possibly get from those who expected to use the vessels. That is borne out by this statement made by Mr. Lloyd George—

“There is no doubt whatever that this exploitation has been one of the chief causes of the enormous advances in prices. It is admitted that prices would have advanced as a direct consequence of the war in any case, but the fact that profiteers have had practically a free hand is nothing short of a crime against the community. The high prices have told heavily against large numbers of the poor people with comparatively small fixed incomes, as well as the wives, widows, mothers, and other dependents of soldiers and sailors. The

[Mr. Winstanley.

strongest exception is taken to the sacrifice of one class being used for the enrichment of another, and while this feeling is particularly keen in regard to food supplies, there is a very widespread conviction that in respect of many other commodities, such as steel, shipping, chemicals, wool, oil, rubber, and the like, the nation has been heavily plundered during the past three years.”

Then some examples are given of where this is taking place—

#### “PROFITS OF MEAT COMPANY.

“A recent balance-sheet published by the British and Argentine Meat Company showed that the profits of this concern rose from £67,000 in 1914 to £411,000 last year, and it would seem that the latter profit was declared after meeting special war taxation.

“We give almost at random some facts and figures in regard to profits which we think justify the demand we are making. We are not aware that the figures are in any way exceptional, and we do not quote the firms in question as being worse than others, but merely as justifying the need for all-round inquiry.

“At a recent meeting of Messrs. Lipton, Ltd., the deputy chairman was able to announce a trading profit of £441,184. He declared this to be—The highest recorded in the history of the company, despite the fact that they had had to overcome unprecedented difficulties in trading owing to war conditions. A profit of £258,530 remained to be carried to the balance-sheet; in other words, they had more than doubled their last year's profit at a cost of an increase of less than one-twelfth on last year's expenses.”

“The Burmah Oil Company, which is a Glasgow-controlled firm, showing a trading profit in 1915 of £991,700, and this rose in 1916 to £1,423,600. Ordinary dividend free of income tax was paid for 1916 to the extent of £571,500, at the rate of 30 per cent.”

There is quite a number of examples of the same kind that have influenced to some extent prices even in this country. Here is just another one in connection with shipping—

#### “MONEY IN SHIPPING.

“At the annual meeting of the Nitrate Producers' Steamship Company, Ltd., held on Thursday, 14th June, 1917, Mr. John Latta, chairman of the company, said: ‘Shipowners have been accused of giving more attention to making inordinate profits than to serving the nation. I resent this imputation.’ He then said that it gave him pleasure to propose that dividend at the rate of 15 per cent. be paid for the final six months of the financial year, together with a bonus of 15 per cent., both free of income tax, and that the following appropriations be made:—Reserve for depreciation, £50,000; general reserve, £50,000; deferred building fund, £38,076; and carried forward, £8,370.”

It seems to me that there are ample grounds for the statements which have been made that there is profiteering in this connection all over the world. We have not escaped in

Queensland. One of the difficulties we have laboured under has been that shipping for some time past has been practically at a standstill on the Queensland coast. No pains have been spared in Opposition circles to put the responsibility and the blame on the present Labour Government for what has taken place here. The Government have not control over shipping; but that does not matter. If hon. members on the other side can get people to believe it, it is all that is necessary for them. It is well known that the conditions with regard to food in North Queensland have been anything but satisfactory for the past two months. During that time the people have been practically on rations, and have not had enough to eat. I want to say that whoever has been in charge of the Government on this side—whether it was the Treasurer when the Premier was away, or the Acting Chief Secretary—has left no stone unturned and spared no effort to keep shipping going to supply the people in North Queensland with foodstuffs.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WINSTANLEY: I want to say also that the Federal Government, instead of doing their best to help them in that direction have done quite the reverse, and on more than one occasion have blocked what would have been successful action on our part to keep shipping going and the people of North Queensland supplied with food. As an evidence of how much concern they have for the people in the north of Queensland, before I left a boat came from Brisbane to Townsville which was expected to bring a fairly substantial cargo of flour. In ordinary times the bakers carry fairly large stocks. The bakers on Charters Towers claimed to have at least two months' stock of flour on hand regularly. Owing to short shipping they had got down to bedrock, and were waiting for shipments to come along so that they could get the flour made into bread and serve it to the people. The ship eventually came along, and on arrival at Townsville, was found to have somewhere about 187 hogsheads of beer, a large consignment of bottled beer, 200 or 300 tons of malt, and quite a large consignment of sugar for the brewery; and there were only 50 tons of flour on board!

Mr. KIRWAN: One ship went north full of barbed wire and beer.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The Government have been blamed for the cargoes on these particular ships, but they had practically nothing to do with it. Two or three ships arrived with similar cargo. It was stated—and I think with a good deal of truth—that even the waterside workers at Townsville threatened that, if the same thing occurred again, instead of putting the cargo on the wharf, they would put it in the creek. That would have been the best place for it. When the Federal Government consented to allow the "Chillagoe" to go, she was loaded up with a cargo for North Queensland. The members of the Queensland Government asked that that ship should take at least 1,000 tons of flour. She had a carrying capacity of 1,500 tons. I was trying to get 20 tons for an individual up there. The Brisbane Milling Company were exceptionally courteous, and did all they could to help me. Eventually I found merchants who were prepared to supply the flour. I know others who were in the same position

as I was. When they went down to the shipping company and asked about space they were told there was no space available—that it had all been allotted—and these consignments were not accepted. Instead of taking 1,000 tons of flour, that ship did not take 500 tons. It certainly took 1,000 tons of what were said to be foodstuffs, but they were what people should have managed without—what would be regarded as luxuries beyond the reach of a great many. When people went there and asked for space, they were told by the shipping company that they were running the ship and putting the cargo in it, and not the Government, and they were sending what their customers, the merchants, wanted. Such a thing is nothing less than a public scandal at such a time. People have been practically starving from that time to the present. Although every effort has been made—I know two boats have gone up—even now people in many of the northern and north-western towns are practically starving for food. Some merchants have no hesitation in putting the "screw" on to their fellow-members if they take it upon themselves to retail their goods at anything like fair prices. Prices are fixed, I believe, about every fortnight. On one or two occasions members of the merchants' association have taken it upon themselves to sell their goods at what they thought a fair profit. Immediately they do that they find that something takes place which is not to their advantage. I have in my pocket a letter which gives an instance that occurred quite recently. A merchant who is well known in Brisbane and North Queensland, who is in a position to get his goods as cheaply as, and perhaps cheaper than, anybody else, took it upon himself to fix his own price and sell to the people at what he thought was a fair and reasonable rate. The next week his goods did not come along; they accidentally got lost somewhere. Of course we know how that kind of thing happens. At the present time 50s. is the price for a bag of maize; potatoes are 14s. per quarter; and the price of other commodities are at the same rates. These people fix prices which are not fair and reasonable, but sometimes are 100 per cent. over the ordinary market price. We do not need to go very far from home to find profiteering and people putting the "screw" on to others who want to do the fair and just thing. A great deal has been said in connection with arbitration, direct action, and a lot of kindred subjects. Nobody on this side of the House has ever thought that the last word has been said so far as arbitration is concerned. The Arbitration Act, like other Acts, has been made by human beings, and it has frailties; but I think it is an unwise thing to destroy anything simply because it does not come up to expectations. As a matter of fact, there is no getting away from arbitration. When people say they will have nothing to do with the Arbitration Court, and will not recognise its awards, they have to get somewhere with somebody and do what is, after all nothing more or less than arbitration before they can get a settlement. While the Act may not be perfect, it is better to try and make it perfect, and certainly not to destroy it until we have something else to take its place.

I now want to touch on health matters. The hon. member for Oxley last night spoke in rather a sneering manner about the expense the Government had incurred in connection with the influenza epidemic. I think

*Mr. Winstanley.]*



the Government and the Health Department are to be commended for the efforts they made and the work they did in trying to keep Queensland clear of the disease. Although they did not succeed, it is to their credit that we had a much less virulent type of the epidemic here than they had in other places. The precautions taken and the efforts put forward in quite a number of directions minimised to a great extent what might have been a very deplorable epidemic. I think they are deserving of the commendation not only of the members of this House, but of the people outside. I hope the time is not far distant when medical officers from one end of the Commonwealth to the other will be public servants and be at the disposal of the community, not merely to cure people, but to devise means for keeping them well—because prevention, after all, is better than cure. In all probability, if their incomes were assured and they had some leisure, they would render services in other directions which they do not render at the present time. I am glad to see there is on the Government programme such a thing as unemployment insurance. It was said last night that it was a disgrace to a young country like Queensland that such a measure should be necessary. Whether it is a disgrace or not, certainly it is an absolute necessity. I am glad to know that the Government are going to increase employment for men on the railways, particularly on the North Coast Railway. To have unemployed people is, in my opinion, the most disastrous thing that can happen to a young country. There are three factors in production—labour, land, and capital. Workers have only got their labour. They have not got the land, and one of the difficulties in this country, as well as in other countries, is that men who would employ themselves on the land cannot do so because the land is inaccessible to them. Therefore, something of the kind proposed by the Government should be carried out. If a man has a right to life, to liberty, and to the pursuits of happiness, he certainly should have a right to work; and I think it is the duty of the Government to see that everybody in the community is usefully employed. (Hear, hear!) You cannot get away from the fact that if men cannot get work they have to be fed. My experience of men is that they are not looking for food without having to work. They are not looking for benevolence or for charity, but want work in order that they may earn their livelihood. It is a dead loss to the community to have men unemployed, and it is certainly a dead loss to the individuals themselves. Nothing deteriorates so quickly as an unemployed man; he deteriorates mentally, morally, and physically. Therefore, I hail with a good deal of pleasure the proposed introduction of a Bill of this kind. I would remind the House that the Government acted very successfully when a large number of men in Northern Queensland lost their work owing to the closing of the copper mines. They provided work for those men at half wages, and the work offered by the Government was accepted by the men. The action of the Government in this instance has been followed with encouraging results, and, if the principle acted upon in this particular case can be applied to wider areas embracing men who are capable and willing to work, I am sure the results will be beneficial to the community. We ought to remember that

[*Mr. Winstanley.*

there are quite a number of men besides the ordinary workers who live on the community and practically render no service for what they receive from the community. However, I hold that the Government deserve commendation for their enterprise in this matter, which will be appreciated by those who have been able to take advantage of that enterprise.

A good deal has been said about the Government being profiteers, and at the same time complaint has been made of their failure to make their enterprises pay. The two statements are scarcely reconcilable, but hon. members opposite say what suits them on the impulse of the moment. If an enterprise undertaken by the Government does not show a profit, they say that is due to bad business management and to inefficiency and incapacity on the part of the Government servants. If the enterprise does show a profit, then they say the Government are profiteers and are levying blackmail on the community. It is no use trying to satisfy or convince persons who express such opinions. I certainly think that, so far as the State enterprises are concerned, up to the present time the Government have no reason to be afraid or ashamed of the result which they have achieved or will achieve.

With reference to the iron and steel industry, a good deal of complaint has been made against the Government because they have taken some time to get all the necessary information before launching that enterprise. In the case of an enterprise of the size and importance of iron and steel works, a Government would be nothing less than mad if they did not ascertain to the very fullest extent what their opportunities and prospects are. I think the Government are to be commended rather than otherwise for making the fullest investigations possible with regard to our iron ore deposits, supplies of fuel, flux, and site. They have also to consider the means of assembling all those things together in such a way as will make the enterprise successful. The Government have not been unduly cautious in the matter, and there is no ground for condemning them for the apparent delay which has taken place in starting the enterprise. It is one of those matters which needs to be very carefully thought out before they take steps to establish the industry.

Referring now to another matter, I think the Government deserve commendation for taking some steps in connection with reafforestation. The destruction of timber that has taken place during the past few years has gone on to such an extent as to show that, unless some means of reafforestation are adopted in the near future, timber will not be as plentiful as it is even at the present time. The way timber has been destroyed in the past in Queensland is nothing less than a scandal. Forests have been felled, or set on fire and destroyed, simply because there was no market available for the timber, and people could not get a reasonable price for it. Queensland has remarkable tracts of forest country containing splendid timbers of all descriptions, but we shall lose much of our supply if something is not done to preserve our forests. Therefore, I am glad to notice that the Government are taking steps to see that timber reserves are not wasted; that trees are not cut down uselessly, and that some provision is made to secure a full supply of all the timbers that are necessary for our industries. The Government

are also to be commended for their proposal in connection with workers' homes. The homes of workers, even in a place like Brisbane, in a great many localities leave a good deal to be desired. It is a well-known fact that rents are high, and

[8 p.m.] the conditions and poor surroundings are anything but what they ought to be in the interests of a healthy and wholesome community; and I think that if the Government can provide homes and by that means bring about an improvement, not only in the direction of a reduction in the rent of houses, but in other directions, they will be rendering conspicuous service to the community. I certainly think that, where houses are jammed together as they are in some places in Brisbane, it is a public scandal, and it is time that landowners were prevented from dividing and subdividing and redividing land until there is practically no room to build a house on an allotment. I am glad to have had the opportunity of placing these views before the House, although I have one or two points I shall have to leave for another time.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In addressing myself to the question before the House, I should like to take the opportunity, as a Northerner and one representing a Northern electorate, to place on record the thanks we owe to the engineers and officers aboard the s.s. "Tinana." We all know the state of things that prevails in the North—a state almost of starvation and absolute shortage of the necessaries of life—and we are aware of the efforts that are being made to get boats up there with supplies. As to the cause that has led to such a position, I shall say more later on, but just now I want to say that, if any men ever had a fair cause for complaint, it was these men. They were in the position of receiving lower pay than those working under them. I think that the boatswain gets as much as the chief officer, and that each seaman gets more than the second officer, and the same thing in regard to the engineers. Before sailing on this trip they approached the Government for a rectification of this injustice, and the Government—to their shame, be it said—refused to meet them and give them a fair "do." However, no matter what the grievance was, these men were not going to allow the women and children up North to suffer, and they are taking the boat up on the present trip without pay—I understand that they have signed on at 1s. a month. Considering their action, in view of what is being done in other quarters, I think it is desirable that some recognition should be made of their services. Compare what is happening in their case with what happened in the case of a large boat—one of some 2,000 tons burden, which is directly under the control of the Government—where every demand in the way of higher pay, better accommodation, shorter hours, insurance, and so on, was granted. I take it that in the case of the "Allinga," seeing that she is under charter to the Government, all this has been done, and yet she has been lying in the Brisbane River idle week after week, simply because of a dispute over a steward, whilst all the while the people in the North are on the verge of starvation.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you not know that the manning of that ship is in the hands of a company in town?

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not care whose hands it is in. A dispute over one officer—

who, let me say, has been on that boat for years—is not sufficient reason why women and children should starve.

Mr. KIRWAN: He has not been on the boat for years.

Mr. SWAYNE: I will ask the Secretary for Agriculture to put that matter before his electors. Just because of a tiff over a steward that big boat, although every demand has been granted, is lying there idle. Dealing with the condition in Queensland to-day, I think it will be admitted the great need is greater production. Everybody is talking production, and yet how many are honestly trying to bring about increased production? We want production to furnish the money necessary to pay our share of the heavy cost that has been incurred during this great war. We want the money to provide for the repatriation of soldiers. Unemployment is more rife at the present time in Queensland than it has been for years; and it is only by production that that bad state of things can be put right. The position in Queensland to-day under our present rule is that everything in the shape of enterprise, in the shape of thrift, is being discouraged out of existence. We find that all around people are holding back. It has become, unfortunately, only too apparent that the moment anyone exhibits anything in the shape of a little more enterprise, attempts to save, or endeavours to benefit this country of ours, he immediately becomes a target for abuse and heavy taxation. As showing the position, I would like to point out that in the last year of Liberal administration the direct taxation of Queensland amounted to £954,000. In about four years it has risen to £2,750,000. The increase is very nearly £2,000,000, and that has to be borne by a comparatively small number of individuals. I have not the figures by me, but I think that those who pay direct taxation in Queensland number about 30,000. I do not think it is much more than that, and I take it that the most enterprising and the most saving members of the community have to furnish that large sum. And let me say that a considerable portion of that money is being paid away simply for the purpose of buying political support. Is it any wonder that people refrain from going in for those enterprises and undertakings for which a country such as this offers such good opportunities? I say that the policy of extortion and exploitation as practised against those who exhibit the qualities necessary to make a young country a great nation is taxing and repressing them out of existence in Queensland.

We find a long programme of measures in the Governor's Speech. What they are, it is impossible for us to say yet. There are all sorts of fetching names that may mean everything or nothing. For instance, the Fair Prices Bill heads the list. "Profiteering" seems to be a word very much in favour on the other side, and yet, in spite of all the activity, or promised activity, of members opposite on the subject, and although they have been in office for four years, the cost of living has gone up proportionately more in Queensland than in any of the other States. Now, we have a promise of a measure to deal with it. If it is a measure to restrict the operations of combines and monopolies which are abusing their position and taking undue advantage of the people and getting unfair profits from them, I am quite sure it will get every support

*Mr. Swayne.]*

from this side of the House. But I would just like to utter a word of warning to the primary producer. We know that, under cover of such measures, he may be dealt hardly with, advantage taken of him, and the prices of his produce forced down to such a degree that they do not yield him a living wage. I would urge the farming member in the House to see that, while every effort is made to secure a fair deal for the community as a whole, a very close watch is kept to see how this legislation is going to affect the farmer. We all know of the achievements of this Government in the past. We know how they commandeered the farmers' butter at less than the cost of production, and I trust that under this Bill nothing of that kind will be attempted.

Further on in the Speech we find an Arbitration Act Amendment Bill is promised. In view of what is taking place in Queensland to-day, most people are asking if it is worth while spending any money at all in the upkeep of the Arbitration Court. I am sure that there is no country in the world with as many Arbitration Courts as we have, and yet unrest is just as rife here—I dare say proportionately it is more prevalent—as anywhere else, and such being the case it is a question as to whether it is worth while doing anything in this matter. For instance, we all feel the greatest pleasure that peace has been brought about. The great war that has been raging for the last four or five years has terminated favourably to us, and, though we still find ourselves free, and while we have been congratulating ourselves on the fact that peace has been brought about, we know that there is no peace. We know that we are only out of one war into another; that, though the war between the nations has terminated, we are threatened with what is described by hon. members opposite as a class war. There is no getting away from the fact that the actions of hon. members opposite, by words and deeds, have largely brought about the present situation in Australia; and in Australia, of all countries in the world, such should not be the case, because every man and woman over twenty-one years of age has a vote, and has a say in the making of the laws, and therefore any action taken against the laws is an attempt by a minority to defy the majority, and most certainly that is not democracy. As regards the North, we find that it is in an absolute state of siege. I dare say our enemies in parts of Europe are in no worse condition than that in which the people of the North find themselves to-day. We know that they are short of food, and that some of our most important products are in jeopardy at the present time. I suppose I am quite within the mark when I say there is standing now, north of Rockhampton, sufficient cane in the field to make 150,000 tons of sugar. That would be worth over £3,000,000, and, unless the shipping hold-up terminates very shortly, the whole of that will be lost. We know very well that the meatworks have had to let their cattle go, and we know that Queensland has lost the value of the cattle trade for some time; and, if a total loss occurs, it cannot be made good. A lot of those cattle will, no doubt, lose condition; and all this comes just when Queensland wants money more urgently than at any other time. We have lost the income that the State would have derived from the treatment of those cattle. Again, we talk about dear food, and yet we

know that food is being wasted at the present time. We know that a large amount of fruit is being destroyed at Bowen. We know that Bowen, instead of sending down 200,000 cases of cucumbers and tomatoes, has only sent about 10,000 cases; and yet, in spite of all that, people express wonder because food is dear. In that case the high price of food is certainly not due to the profiteer. The action of the seamen at the present time is giving a certain amount of opportunity for the profiteer. They have brought about a position of which, in some instances, advantage has been taken. Very often when such a thing does happen it is directly brought about by such occurrences as are now taking place, and most certainly the people cannot expect cheap food if it is scarce, and if, as I have already pointed out, it is wasted as is the case at the present time. That condition of things has been going on for years. We have only to go back to the tram strike in 1912 to find that the farmers' produce was wasted through strikes. Again, in 1917, another strike occurred, and a similar loss occurred. Though we have a Labour Government in Queensland, this State seems to be the place where all this strife starts.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What an innocent statement!

Mr. SWAYNE: I have here some facts concerning the shipping hold-up that has been exercising our minds so much during this debate. I find that it started in Brisbane on 4th February last, by the hands on the "Cooma," for whom Brisbane was the home port, giving twenty-four hours' notice. As showing the misrepresentations that are being made on the other side in regard to this matter, I will read an extract from a speech made during this debate by the hon. member for Mackay—something similar has been said by nearly every hon. member on the other side who has spoken. As reported on page 118 of "Hansard," the hon. member of Mackay said—

"That is a matter between the Government of the Commonwealth and the Federated Seamen and Firemen's Union. But I do wish to say that the first request of the men was an eminently fair one, and it was one with which everyone who has any degree of human feeling and who believes in a rational course of conduct in the community would agree. We must always bear in mind that the dispute commenced when the seamen on the vessels trading to infected ports asked that they be insured, so that, in the event of their contracting the prevailing epidemic and losing their lives, their wives and dependents would be provided for. They asked that, in the event of their losing their lives from a very contagious disease—a disease which, bear in mind, broke out first and was most rampant in the forecasts of the various ships—they be brought within the scope of the Workers' Compensation Act. Their case was as deserving as is that in connection with any other form of disease which at present comes within the scope of the State Act. That was refused by the Government of the Commonwealth. I think I am justified in saying that the Federal Government are continuing the policy which they initiated in 1917. It will be remembered that in 1917 serious industrial disputes

[Mr. Swayne.

took place in New South Wales, and the Government of that State and the Government of the Commonwealth embarked at that time upon a union-smashing policy. They were out to bring the great unions of Australia to their knees—to bring them, as it were, to the bread line—so that, when that took place, they would be able to deal with them as individuals in any way they desired. They were not so successful as they anticipated they would be. We can also remember that during that period the members of the Opposition in this House and their friends outside did everything they could to spread that industrial chaos to Queensland.”

What are the facts of the case? So far as the present strike is concerned, it commenced on the “Cooma,” on 4th February of this year, and every demand made then has been kept hidden except the matter of accommodation. We all know that there are several other points in dispute. First of all, there is the matter of insurance.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That was the original demand.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yet we know that, when the men refused to sail, the “Cooma” was going north, and there was no influenza in the North at the time. If it had been in connection with a steamer going south, it might have been said that they were going into the danger zone; but this boat was going north; therefore the quotation I have read from the speech of the hon. member for Mackay is most misleading. We find there were four demands made—demands for higher wages, better accommodation, a six-hour day in port, and insurance against sickness and death. As regards the sickness, the men were already under the Merchant Shipping Act, which compels the owner, in case of sickness of the crew, to take the men to the hospital to be attended to, and pay all costs. In regard to accident and disease incurred in the prosecution of their duty, they were under the Workers’ Compensation Act, the same as any other worker in Queensland, and they had the Arbitration Court to go to if they considered they were entitled to anything more. A fifth demand was conceded at once. The shipping companies, without any parley at all, gave way upon one point directly—that was the matter of payment during quarantine. Then, as far as the increase of £1 15s. a month was concerned, I am informed that they had just got a rise. The union had just been before the court. I will show later on that every effort was made to meet them in that regard. The claim for a six-hour day could have been brought before the court. As I have already said, what is the use of maintaining these tribunals if they are not appealed to? The huge profits of the shipping companies have been touched on over and over again, but nothing has happened during the war which gives any warrant for that statement. Since the Commonwealth has taken the interstate steamers over, the owners have been paid the charter rates provided by the British Parliamentary Blue Book, and which ship-owners on the other side of the world are receiving. Further, so far as the Australian coast is concerned, there has been no increase in freights or fares since the war started. I think that puts a very different aspect on

the matter to what we have been hearing from the other side during the last few days. Then, again, we were also told of the wonderful things the Government were doing. I admit they have got up a few small steamers; but it will be found, if the results of what has been done during the emergency by private enterprise are compared with the work done by the Government, that private enterprise has done more than the Government have. I can say that one small ship in private hands has taken more foodstuffs to Mackay than any of the Government steamers. The Government were offered ships—the “Kadina” and others—at the beginning by the Commonwealth Government to carry foodstuffs, the one condition being that they should coal them; but because one craneman refused to handle the coal—one man only stood in the way—with the result that the offer of the Commonwealth Government was not accepted. We are not told anything of that kind by the other side. The sufferers in the North, and the farmers who have lost their sugar crops and other crops, will realise that an attempt to make political capital is being made.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers of Bowen were never so prosperous as they are now.

Mr. SWAYNE: While hon. members opposite foster every strike of this kind, we find that directly afterwards they say they are in favour of arbitration. I have here an authority which should carry some weight with them, and which points out that this strike is an attempt to break down arbitration. This is a statement by Mr. F. W. Birrell, the president of the Adelaide Labour Council. He says—

“Messrs. Le Cornu and Walsh have publicly stated that the seamen’s trouble is a fight against arbitration.”

Speaking about the trouble and misery brought about to those concerned by these strikes, he says—

“During a recent visit to Sydney I had recounted to me heartrending stories of the misery created by the industrial upheaval in 1917. Mothers and little children, prospective mothers, and even formerly strong, healthy men were brought to the verge of starvation at that period.”

Regarding the demands of the seamen for extra pay, accommodation, and other things, Senator Millen, speaking in Melbourne on 23rd July, said—

“As some misapprehension apparently exists as to the competence of the Federal Arbitration Court to deal with the claims submitted on behalf of the Seamen’s Union, and as it is highly desirable that the actual facts should be known, I desire to set out, in as concise a form as possible, what the claims are which the representatives of the Seamen’s Union have declared to be vital, and the grounds for the definite assertion that the court is competent to deal with them. The claims which the representatives of the union have declared to be vital are as follow:—(1) Better accommodation for seamen; (2) a six-hour day in port; (3) insurance against sickness and death; (4) £1 15s. per month increase in wages. In regard to the first claim, the president

*Mr. Swayne.]*

of the court stated at the first compulsory conference held in connection with the present dispute that he was prepared to concede this claim, and the representatives of the men accepted Rear-Admiral Sir William Clarkson's offer, made at this first conference, to do everything possible to at once render the accommodation more satisfactory to the men. The subject-matters of claims numbers 2 and 3 were not before the court in connection with the 1918 award, and it is consequently open to the court to now award upon them."

There was a court which, in the past, had given no grounds for complaint, and which was open to the men, and they have no right to put the community to the loss which has been inflicted upon it. In flouting the Industrial Court, we find they are supported and encouraged by hon. members opposite. Senator Millen went on to say—

"It may also be recalled that in a statement made from the bench on 7th June, the president, in expressing his anxiety to see the work of the country carried on with justice to seamen, who, from various causes, have not until lately received anything like proper treatment, added, 'I even went so far as to say, so far as one who might have to arbitrate could say, that the claims for proper accommodation ought, in substance, to be granted, and that there appeared to be no sound reason why there should not be compensation for sickness or death arising in the service, as well as for accidents arising in the service.'"

There is a distinct indication that the court were prepared to meet them. There was something more than just those claims concerned.

Mr. CARTER: Profiteering

Mr. SWAYNE: There was no profiteering. There was what is commonly called Bolshevism—a part of the general war against the ownership of any kind of property. [8.30 p.m.] In regard to the matter of accommodation, I think this side of the case should be put before the public in view of the misrepresentation that has taken place. This is a matter on which the seamen deserve a certain amount of sympathy—

"Referring to the matter of improved accommodation for seamen, the Shipping Controller (Admiral Sir William Clarkson) said to-day that at the second conference with the men he had informed them that if they would point out, ship by ship, what accommodation they required, the shipowners and he would meet them to discuss the matter, and they would do anything that was at all practicable."

In view of that, it is very difficult, indeed, to justify the conduct of the men, seeing their demands were promised sympathetic treatment. It is in very unfavourable contrast with the behaviour of the engineers aboard the "Tinana." Since the strike started, another bone of contention has been introduced. Because of a breach of the law the secretary of the offending union has been put in prison. He was not imprisoned on the first charge; he was given his opportunity, and repeated the offence. I have here the Commonwealth Conciliation and

Arbitration Act of 1904. I find it is laid down—

"No person or organisation shall, on account of any industrial dispute, do anything in the nature of a lockout or strike, or continue any lockout or strike."

Again, section 8 provides—

"Any organisation of employers or employees which, for the purpose of enforcing compliance with the demands of any employers or employees, orders its members to refuse to offer or accept employment, shall be deemed to be guilty of a lockout or strike, as the case may be."

I ask hon. members opposite, do they consider the laws should be obeyed? By supporting Mr. Walsh in this case they are laying down the dictum that the law may be broken with impunity, if by a union official. If an employer had locked out—

Mr. KIRWAN: Like the Mount Morgan directors.

Mr. SWAYNE: And laid himself open to a charge, and he was arrested and convicted, if the other employers said they would try and starve the community if he were not let out of gaol, what would hon. gentlemen opposite say about that? Would they consider that such a breach of the law should be condoned? Apparently that is the position we have reached in Australia, and it is supported by hon. gentlemen opposite. A great deal more importance has been attached to the conviction of Mr. Walsh than to any of the other grounds of complaint. It will be seen that he courted the sentence he got and did his best to bring it about. I have here an extract from the Sydney "Sun" of two or three weeks ago. It gives the report of what Mr. Walsh said in the Melbourne court—

"I'm determined not to allow the Federal Government to evade its responsibility to the people—that is to lock me up," declared Mr. Walsh, secretary of the Seamen's Union, at a meeting held in the Socialists' Hall last night.

"The duty of the Federal Government, after I say what I intend saying to-night, will be to send me to prison, but not one ship will move along the coast of Australia while I'm in gaol, and we will test the "scab" organising ability of Admiral Clarkson.

"I advise the Government to find a solution of the strike, and so that it cannot camouflage the position by saying that no seamen are present, I ask the seamen here to hold up their hands."

"Hands having been shown by a number of the men, Mr. Walsh continued: 'I now advise you to remain out on strike. I do not want you to offer your services to shipowners until the strike is settled. I want you to do all in your power to throw this city into darkness as soon as possible, so that the original charge may be closely followed.

"I wish to say this," Mr. Walsh added, "the only place in Australia where freedom can be obtained is in gaol."

In the face of that, could any Government refuse to carry out the law? I am not quite sure whether the Act was a Labour Act. I

[Mr. Swayne.

know that it was enacted by the Commonwealth Parliament in 1904, when the Labour Government held office; but there was also a Liberal Government during the same year, and it may have originated with either one or the other. But after it was on the statute-book, several Labour Governments were in office. We had the Watson Government, and two or three Fisher Governments, and they never altered that law. They evidently thought it was a good law, and they left it on the statute-book. This man deliberately broke that law. I ask hon. members opposite whether they are going to signify their approval of a man who set himself out deliberately to break the law. There has not been a speech made in this House or outside in regard to this matter by hon. gentlemen opposite that does not contain some covert encouragement to the men on strike to do their best to starve out the people living in the wilderness in the North of Queensland. If, through such deeds as these, it becomes impossible to live there, if the present population have to abandon the North because they cannot get flour there, you will have a race there who will eat rice. This high ideal of a white Australia that we have set up so far as the future of this continent is concerned will be thrown away by these men making it impossible for white people to live there. Nor only has this law which has been broken received the approval of the Labour party, but they must remember that any law which is passed in Australia is passed by a Parliament which is representative of the people. No matter what excuses may be made by people in other parts of the world who have been ground down—I am quite prepared to admit that the action taken against other forms of government prevailing in Europe perhaps has a certain amount of justification to excuse it—there is no justification in Australia. Yet we find there is exactly the same spirit in Australia as there is in Europe. I think young Australians ought to take notice of the fact that most of the men who are bringing about these quarrels have come from other countries. In many cases young men are being made tools of by foreign agitators. I suggest that before they are led away they make a close scrutiny of the antecedents of some of those men before they came to Australia. I notice that reference has been made to the 1917 strike. We have been told that that was an attempt to kill unionism. It was nothing of the kind.

MR. SMITH: You did your best to spread it to Queensland, anyhow.

MR. SWAYNE: While that strike was on, and while the constituents of the hon. member who has interjected were suffering heavy and ruinous losses—there is not a single farmer in his electorate or in mine who did not lose £100 and often a great deal more—the hon. gentleman was at a meeting held in the Domain one Sunday afternoon. A report of that meeting appeared in the "Daily Standard" of 3rd September, 1917, from which this is an extract—

"That this public meeting of Brisbane citizens send hearty greetings to the brave men now on strike in New South Wales, and express its unbounded admiration of their splendid solidarity and wonderful orderliness under protest and most wilful provocation."

After that I would ask, who was encouraging the strike? Who, but the gentlemen who

moved and supported a resolution of that character. The hon. member for Brisbane was there, and seconded the resolution, saying—

"They must see to it that the work so nobly began by William Lane and continued by others was not destroyed."

I will give the hon. member something more about the Lane fiasco before I conclude. With regard to profiteering, I say that, if it can be shown that there is real profiteering in Queensland, I am quite sure hon. members on this side of the House will support legislation to deal with it. The strike of 1917 has been described as an attempt by the New South Wales Government to down unionism. Yet we find that union officials spoke in severe condemnation of that strike. Mr. C. Burke, president of the Federated Seamen's Union of Australia, who is also secretary of the Queensland branch of that union, said—

"The members of our own union then became uneasy at the prospect of having to work with the 'loyalists,' and decided to come out before they were asked to do so, the ill-advised action of the waterside men precipitating the trouble on to the shoulders of the seamen, who, to all intents and purposes, could in no way affect the railwaymen. However, having once entered upon the struggle, in defiance of the executive officers of the union, there remained nothing but to see the matter through to its final end, no matter what the consequences might be."

That strike started in the Government railway workshops, allegedly because of the introduction of what was known as the card system, and we know that, if the strike had been successful, Australia would have been down and out so far as doing our part in the war is concerned. Yet hon. members opposite have spoke in praise of the strike, which a unionist official described as "ill-advised action." The judge who dealt with this matter in open court, said—

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

Then, Mr. Cavanagh, secretary of the New South Wales Labour Council, said, referring to the 1917 strike—

"From the outset the constitution of the Labour Council has been ignored. The council was in no way responsible for the strike or its extension. At the commencement of the trouble the executive of the Council met delegates from unions affected by the introduction of the card system. Some of the unions, or sections of some unions, had decided

*Mr. Swayne.]*

to take certain action, and he was told point blank that, irrespective of the Labour Council, they would go right on. To that the executive of the Labour Council replied that they would refuse to shoulder any responsibility."

If any section of the community take the law into their own hands, as has been done in the present instance, then the persons who do that should be punished, as they are simply attempting to coerce the majority of the people. As the hon. member for Brisbane has expressed such warm admiration of the "New Australia" experiment, I propose to read a few extracts from a book entitled "Where Socialism Failed." Those hon. members who are strong advocates of socialism cannot point us to any instance or instances where socialism has succeeded. But so far they have not done so, and we know that in Queensland State enterprises, on the whole, are turning out failures. That has been the history of socialistic enterprises in other States, and, so far as I know, there is no instance in which socialism has proved a success. The writer of the book to which I have referred describes the position in New Australia in Paraguay, with a view to showing the disillusionment of those who took part in that venture. I think the qualification for a member of the association was £60, so that the men who took part in the venture were, to a certain extent, picked men, and the venture should have had every chance of succeeding. But we know it ended in failure. At page 137 of this book, the writer says—

"There is absolutely no regard for common property," wrote 'Colonist' in the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' 'tools and implements are lost, mislaid, or destroyed in the most disgraceful manner. At the Las Ovejas settlements last year the melon beds were trampled on by adults and children. Thousands were broken open, and not one was allowed to come to maturity.'"

It is quite likely that the following experience will be repeated on a large scale in Queensland under the present Government. The writer further says—

"When the disastrous effect of these two contracts (one for cattle and one for timber) became known, there were those who did not hesitate to declare that they had been betrayed by their officials, and some came forward with a proposition very much like this: 'What's the good of pretending to be socialists any longer. It only gives the cunningest ones the chance to feather their nest. Let's divide everything up while there is anything left to divide, and turn individualists—each for himself and the devil take the hindmost.'"

The writer summarises—

"Mismanagement, extravagance, favouritism, indolence, discontent, heathenism, these are the necessary accompaniments of socialism; while industry, economy, thrift, independence, self respect, and satisfaction are sterling qualities called forth by legitimate pride in individual ownership."

Such an experience, such a case as that, is

[*Mr. Swayne.*]

worth any amount of theory, and any amount of possibilities which never have been realised.

Mr. SMITH: Who is the writer of that book?

Mr. SWAYNE: Stewart Grahame. Before I sit down I should like to touch on a very important matter in regard to repatriation. I elicited by a question of the Secretary for Lands the other day that during the war, while our boys have been away, something like 38,000,000 acres of our finest grazing land had been alienated, and not one single acre was set apart for them; no priority was given to them. Although a certain amount of agricultural land has been set apart for returned soldiers, nothing of that kind has been done regarding grazing land. Nobody knows better than I do as a farmer the strenuous manual work that is requisite to make farming a success at the present time; and many of these men, owing to what they have undergone during the war, are not fit to undertake such work; yet many are good horsemen and used to cattle, and there is no reason why they could not get on well at grazing farming. Nevertheless no privileges are being given to them. The Secretary for Lands, in answer to another question of mine, as to why priority had not been given, referred me to something he had said in a speech last year. I looked up his utterances, and his argument comes to this: that the blocks he was then dealing with—I may say that I had much smaller blocks on the coast in my mind—were from 40,000 to 60,000 acres in extent, and it was beyond the means of the men to take them up. They should not be beyond the means of the men; the means should be provided by the State, at any rate, to enable them to embark upon modest ventures of the kind for which many of them are adapted. I think that in another way something might be done. So far as I have been able to gather, the same security for loans and terms are required from returned soldiers going on the land as from anybody else. There is little advantage in being a soldier in borrowing money; it is looked upon as being a purely a business transaction, and the soldiers have to possess just the same qualifications as any other borrower. Of course, the onus may be placed on the shoulders of the Commonwealth—which is a common practice with hon. members opposite—but I think I read the other day that the Hon. Mr. Hunter pointed out that all matters which concern the payment of interest and the repayment of loans are in the hands of the State. Such being the case, I want to make a suggestion. I quite realise that it is not much use lending money to those who are not able properly to use it, and there may be some who are not. On the other hand, where there is evidence that they are fit persons to be trusted with loans, I think the least the State can do is to allow them to have the money without interest—give them that privilege over the ordinary borrower. If it is pointed out that this would be a heavy charge, let the community as a whole—those who did not go and fight—find the money to bear it. I think that is a very fair request to make on behalf of those who furnish satisfactory evidence as to their fitness. The least we can do for those who fought for us is to let them have the money without interest, at any

rate, for the first years of the currency of the loan.

Mr. SMITH: They have that advantage now for a period—three years, I think.

Mr. SWAYNE: I know the conditions that have been offered to some of them, and the first interest becomes payable at a very short interval after the loan is granted. I think that what the hon. member is referring to is that there is no payment of redemption for three years.

Mr. SMITH: No—no payment of interest.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think the least we can do is to let them have the money without interest for quite a substantial time. There is another thing to which I would like to draw the attention of the Secretary for Public Lands: that is, that there are not only these large western blocks of 40,000 and 60,000 acres; there is a lot of country close to the coast, and just along the coastal range—very good cattle country—and I think that even at the present time the hon. gentleman proposes to cut up some of it into 3,000 or 4,000 acre blocks. He evidently thinks a living is to be got on such blocks. They are close to the coast and in the settled districts, and I think there are many men who would be able to raise the capital, with the loans that will be given, to occupy them. The least we can do is to give them that preference.

Before the end of the session we shall have before us such Bills as that dealing with co-operation. We have to remember that the best way to get cheaper food is to produce plenty of it. You will never get it by discouraging the producers or by destroying large quantities by industrial strife, and I hope that before the session ends something will be done to bring about security for production by the man on the land. I am prepared to say for the industry in which I am interested that strikes have done more harm to us than bad seasons, insect pests, or anything else during the last few years.

Mr. SMITH: You helped to organise a lock-out in connection with the Dickson award.

Mr. SWAYNE: That is absolutely untrue. I did nothing of the kind. I do not know what the hon. member is alluding to, but in the way he puts it it is distinctly untrue. If I had tried to do such a thing, I should have been deserving of punishment by legal means, and I take it that I probably would have been punished. At any rate, I think that, amongst other things, the Government, when making this amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act—seeing how largely such matters enter into our industrial life and how much that life depends upon industrial peace—might well consider the advisableness of re-passing some of the provisions contained in the Industrial Peace Act.

Further, in view of the heavy [9 p.m.] losses that the community have suffered through such happenings, I think some stringent means should be devised to see that where an award has been made, nothing in the shape of an organised strike takes place. I do not for one moment say that you can make a man work unless he is willing to do so; but where an award has been made, pickets should not be allowed, and men should not be allowed to call people by opprobrious terms in order to

prevent them from working at the award rates; rates which the court considers to be fair and just. I know that you cannot put large numbers of men in gaol for doing anything of that nature, but, if the penalties provided under the old Industrial Peace Act are not sufficient, if men are utterly regardless of the rights of other citizens, they should forfeit the privilege of citizenship and be disfranchised for a certain time. That is one solution that might be considered in connection with any legislation on the matter.

Question stated.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member might have risen before I read the whole question.

Mr. SIZER: I thought it was the custom—

The SPEAKER: The hon. member has a perfect right to do so, but he might have saved me the inconvenience of reading the whole question.

Mr. SIZER: My reason for delaying was that I thought it was the usual custom for a member on the Government side to follow a member of the Opposition, and I naturally thought that an hon. member on the Government side was going to rise. That would have been only reasonable.

Mr. GILDAY: We want to get business through.

Mr. SIZER: I intend, in the course of my remarks, to cover a few points that are worthy of comment in connection with the Address in Reply. One particular item which has been dealt with by almost every speaker on the Government side is the reference in the Speech to the war. I do not propose to take up much time on the war, but wish to show one or two inconsistencies on the part of the Government in that connection. It will be remembered that during the debate on the Financial Statement last year, a good deal of time was taken up on the question of peace by negotiation, and since then the allies have been victorious and peace has been brought about. We have noticed, also, that since peace was declared, hon. members opposite have changed their tune very considerably. I wish for a moment to bring under the notice of hon. members some remarks that were made by the hon. member for Lockyer when speaking on the Financial Statement last year, and I am sorry he is not in his place. I am wondering what he must think now, when he reflects on his speech and the result of our victory. The hon. member for Lockyer, at that time, when things were particularly dark for our side, made use of these words—

"I am in favour of immediate negotiations for peace. I think, in the interests of humanity, both authorities should make an attempt to negotiate. I want to say, further, that negotiations for peace have been put off largely because those in authority in Great Britain have not stated clearly and definitely their war aims."

That statement has been exploded only within the last few days by the remarkable revelations which have been made by German politicians who have stated that, through

*Mr. Sizer.]*



the Pope, Great Britain did approach Germany, and that they themselves ignored those approaches. The principal point I wish to deal with is contained in the following words of the hon. gentleman:—

“I consider it would be a calamity that all would deplore if Germany was beaten in the way hon. members opposite infer. For this reason—that a decided victory by either of the great contending parties to-day is going to mean the maintenance of a militarism to keep in subjection the people that have been beaten. I look forward to the thing ending in a stalemate, so that the people of the world may realise the great mistake of modern warfare, the great misery of militarism, realise what a force it is, and then in one big united effort crush it for all time. This talk about crushing Germany is simply absurd.”

That was the hon. member's view when we were in the dark hours just before the dawn. We have not had the opportunity of hearing the hon. member since; but not one member on the Government side denounced those sentiments; not one hon. member rebuked him in any way for expressing those sentiments, and we have every ground for believing that they coincided with those views; and yet, since the declaration of peace, they have acted as though they had been the “Bill Adams” of the war. It is remarkable that during the peace celebrations they monopolised the whole of the proceedings in spite of the fact that speeches, such as I have quoted and many like them, had been delivered only a few months previously. Another inconsistency is shown in connection with the attitude of the Premier. We know very well that he also favoured immediate peace by negotiations without indemnity or annexation. Yet, while he was in England, the peace negotiations were being carried on in Paris, and we heard from the hon. gentleman neither support nor condemnation of the attitude taken by Mr. Hughes, the representative of Australia, at those negotiations. But immediately the Premier returned to Queensland he opened his mouth in an attack on the Prime Minister of Australia from a political point of view, and said that Australia had not got sufficient. If the Premier believed that, it was his duty, as he was in London at the time, to support the Prime Minister of Australia, and to give him that added strength so that he might have been able to make his case much stronger. But, no, the Premier was silent. It is obvious that he preferred to remain silent in London, let Australia's national interests go down, and return to Australia with a political pull which might help his party to get into power at the next Federal election. Such an attitude is not worthy of a true Australian—it is not worthy of a Premier of a State of Australia. It seems to me that everything is to be sacrificed by hon. members opposite, from the Premier downwards, for party interests and capital. National interests can go—the national fate had been decided before the Premier opened his mouth, but that did not concern him. He wanted a political pull which might help him in the Federal arena when the time came, though we notice, by the way, that the Premier's ambition for Federal politics has fallen somewhat flat of late.

Another inconsistency on the part of hon. members opposite is with regard to open

[*Mr. Sizer.*

diplomacy. They are shedding crocodile tears almost daily on the hustings and in this Chamber on this subject. They say they deplore secret diplomacy. It would be almost amusing, if it were not so serious, that in the early days of the session the same hon. members have applied the “Hush!” on matters of public importance in connection with the expenditure of public money. Hon. members opposite are ashamed of their own administration. We were of opinion with regard to the Hon. Randolph Bedford's expenses that he had got a few hundred pounds. We are now of opinion that he has had a few thousand pounds, and it is for the Government to prove otherwise. We see miscellaneous items for thousands of pounds, but owing to secret diplomacy, we cannot get any idea of what that money has been spent for. Mr. Bedford may have got some of it; but, judging by the attitude of hon. members opposite, they do not intend the general public to know how much he got. If there is nothing to be afraid of, would it have hurt the Acting Premier on that occasion to give that information. Even if Mr. Bedford has got a few hundred pounds he had probably earned it. But, when the Government refuse to give the information, we are entitled to say he has not earned it—that it is a “hush” vote, and he has probably got something he is not entitled to. The people of the State are entitled to know how every penny of State money is expended.

Mr. CORSER: Perhaps Mr. Bedford is not the only one

Mr. SIZER: We know he is not the only one. We know thousands of pounds of the public's money have been spent by hon. members opposite in political propaganda. I do not say anything disparaging about any organisation which is supporting the Government, as they have perfect liberty to do so, but when these political organisations are supported by public funds, it is time that the people of Queensland should be given some information, and, if the Government will not give it, the duty of the Opposition is to try and open the eyes of the people in such a way that the Government will be forced to give it.

I want now to take up a stand on behalf of the returned soldiers, who urgently need support. I have only just come from a deputation to the Secretary for Lands on the question of preference being given to returned soldiers in regard to grazing selections. They are looking to the Government to give them priority in regard to grazing selections, but the Government will not accede to their request. We have been given many reasons, one of the principal being that the soldiers would be “dummies” for the squatters. Do the Government mean to impute that the returned soldiers are less honest than other individuals? If an ordinary man goes in for a ballot and is successful, and can finance himself, he can go on to the land to-day. But, because returned soldiers might possibly be in the same position, they are not given preference in this State. Preference is given in New South Wales, as is shown by the following extract from a letter from a returned soldier in the “Daily Mail” of 6th August last—

“Hundreds of us with grazing experience are debarred from getting grazing blocks by this Labour Government. Yet

the New South Wales Government is giving preference to returned soldiers in grazing blocks of land all over the State, and for every grazing block made available there are many applicants. They are balloted for.

"I would like to show the soldiers, as well as the public, the areas that are being made available by the New South Wales Government for soldier settlement. These blocks were made available on 5th April last: Forty-eight blocks, areas ranging from 315 acres to 4,116 acres; 22 blocks, over 1,304 acres; 13 blocks, over 1,605 acres; 9 blocks, over 2,165 acres, and 7 blocks, over 3,103 acres, all first-class sheep or cattle country."

That shows they are giving them preference in New South Wales.

Mr. MULLAN: What are the areas there—they range from 300 acres?

Mr. SIZER: Yes, but the point is that they give preference in regard to big selections, which this Government does not.

Mr. KIRWAN: You cannot show us the section in the Act.

Mr. SIZER: That is the fact, and I defy any hon. member opposite to prove the contrary.

Mr. KIRWAN: I say they do not give preference.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. member knows perfectly well that they do. He is bluffing, but he cannot get behind the "Government Gazette" of New South Wales.

Mr. MULLAN: What are the areas there?

Mr. SIZER: They range from 6,000 acres down to 300 acres.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They are only apologies for grazing farms.

Mr. SIZER: Seeing we have so much more land in Queensland we can afford to give them preference on bigger areas. This is probably one of the forms of settlement that returned soldiers are likely to do well on. Is it because these men are likely to get financial assistance and become wealthy, that hon. members opposite say they should not have preference? The Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Association have asked for preference, and the Government will not be fulfilling their obligations until they give the returned soldiers preference.

I want to say a word now in connection with the remarks of the hon. member for Burrum with regard to the Merivale street disturbances. The hon. member said that he saw members of this side of the House "sooling" on the returned soldiers on that occasion.

At twenty minutes past 9 o'clock p.m.

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

Mr. SIZER: He was asked to name those hon. members. He refused. I say the hon. member made a deliberate mis-statement in this House. I regret very much that incident. I regret the causes of it. I regret that the Government should have permitted the causes of it. I express my sympathy with anyone who was injured on that occasion. I am sure there is no ill-feeling so

far as the soldiers and police are concerned. But I want to make a comparison of the attitude taken up with regard to the police on that occasion and that taken up with regard to the police in connection with the recent shooting at Townsville. In connection with the Brisbane incident it is regrettable that a permit was granted for the procession. The stipulation was made that no red flag should be carried. For some reason, I believe, that permit was withdrawn, and afterwards another was granted. The Government were fully aware that there was a likelihood of the law being broken, but there was not a sufficient number of police there on that Sunday afternoon to have prevented it.

Mr. BRENNAN: How do you know there was a likelihood of there being trouble?

Mr. SIZER: I gave my reasons before, and the hon. member could not refute a word I said about it. The police were not there in sufficient numbers to prevent that riot. If they had been, we might have been saved a lot of police court trouble. They might have arrested all the offending parties. One case, which happens to be that of a member of this House, has been hanging on for weeks. We might have been able to have arrested him there and then, and the prosecution would have been over long ago. The police must maintain law and order, whether it is soldiers who are defying the law or any other section of the community. It seems remarkable that when shooting took place over in Merivale street there was a big police force present and the police were commended for their action—

Mr. JAMES: For their self-restraint.

Mr. SIZER: Yes, for their self-restraint. Yet when a riot takes place in Townsville there is an inquiry into it with the hope of injuring some of the police.

The feature of this debate seems to have been profiteering. I am as much opposed to exorbitant profits being made as hon. gentlemen opposite. I am prepared to go as far as the hon. gentlemen opposite in having them restricted; but there must be a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate profit. If the Government attempt to tackle illegitimate profit and not to curtail enterprise and retard production, I will be quite prepared to assist them to pass the measure promised in the Governor's Speech. Probably there is a certain amount of profiteering going on, and that is one of the causes of industrial unrest; but hon. gentlemen opposite are not helping to solve it. In saying distinctly that they are out to overthrow capital, they are not likely to assist in solving that problem.

Mr. JAMES: Who wants to overthrow capital?

Mr. SIZER: Hon. gentlemen opposite are working for the day when the overthrow of capital will be an accomplished fact.

Mr. JAMES: You cannot abolish capital: you would abolish production.

Mr. SIZER: I am glad to hear the hon. member say so. Speeches such as are delivered by men of the calibre of Mr. Walsh are not likely to assist, when in a defiant attitude he says that, if he does not get what he wants, he will secure the

*Mr. Sizer.*

support and assistance of the I.W.W. in America, in Germany, and in any other part of the world where he can get it. Something reasonable must be brought forward before there will be any chance of a solution of the problem. Hon. gentlemen opposite charge hon. members on this side of the House with being responsible for profiteering. They seem to have the mythical idea that we are able to purchase our goods at 100 per cent. less than they can theirs. We have to pay the same price as they do. Therefore we are just as interested in the question as they are.

Mr. JAMES: The hon. member has not yet defined "illegitimate profits." He admits that they exist.

Mr. SIZER: When the hon. member for Brisbane says he hopes the men will defy everything until they have their demands conceded, he is not hoping to bring about a settlement. It is most remarkable that in connection with the war the party opposite wanted peace by negotiation, yet with industrial disputes they want to fight to the bitter end. I am going to quote from a speech of the Premier of New South Wales, whose sentiments in the main I endorse—

"Dealing with legislation against monopolies, Mr. Holman said we would not stand the growth of monopolies in any direction. Legislation would be modelled on the lines of the Sherman Anti-trust Act in America. By this means the people would be fully protected against the risk of exploitation. The rights of the workers would be secured, firstly by industrial arbitration, and secondly by parliamentary means."

This is the point I wish to refer to particularly—

"A measure of co-partnership would be arranged for in every industry by the introduction of a system of Whitley councils, which were obtaining such success in Great Britain in profit-sharing and co-partnership. Thus the interest of labour and capital would be reconciled. The Government would resist equally the Bolshevik and the profiteer."

That practically expresses the views I hold on those points. I stress the need for co-operation. Bring the contending parties together; do not drive them apart as speeches such as those delivered by Mr. Walsh and others do. I am very pleased to see we are to have a Health Act Amendment Bill. If there is anything we need, it is an amendment of the Health Act. We have an Act, and we have an administration of that Act, but they do not reflect credit upon the Government or upon those who administer it. We realise that the health of the people is more important than anything, and we should do everything possible to see that our Health Act is the most up to date and the most efficiently administered. We know very well that the Queensland Act is not up to date, and the administration is far from what could be desired. I was fortunate in being able to come into contact with an ex-servant of the department, who made available to me much information relating to that Act and its administration. The hon. member for Mackay spoke of the need for research work in regard to the hookworm disease. I agree with him, not only

[Mr. Sizer.

in regard to the hookworm disease, but in regard to every other disease. We shall accomplish more by applied science than by all the routine work in the world. We had in Dr. Burton Bradley one of the most competent scientists and bacteriologists not only in Australia, but in the world. He was recognised as such by the British Medical Association of London. His work on "Dengue Fever" was looked upon as the medical work of the year.

Mr. BRENNAN: Is that the hallmark of ability?

Mr. SIZER: The recognition of the British Medical Association carries three times as much weight as would a declaration by the president of the Privy Council that the hon. member for Toowoomba was the greatest lawyer in Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: That would not say that it was correct.

Mr. SIZER: We are well aware that such an opinion of the hon. member could not possibly be correct. In Dr. Bradley we had one of the most competent administrators and scientists, not only in Australia, but in the world.

The HOME SECRETARY: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. SIZER: The hon. gentleman will want to know what he is talking about before I finish. Dr. Bradley was prepared to devote himself, heart and soul, to work [9.30 p.m.] in the interests of the people of Queensland. During the time of the diphtheria epidemic his services were very much in demand, and he was wanted to go back at night to work. In a memorandum dealing with this subject, he wrote—

"Sir,—Although I am perfectly willing at a time of stress like this to work back until 6 o'clock if necessary, so that the work may be done, we have no lights in the laboratory, and have been prevented from using an extemporary electric outfit which I fitted up. After half-past 4 it is quite impossible to use daylight."

That is one of the up-to-date methods adopted by the Health Department. There are many things in connection with bacteriology in which they are required to use blood for carrying out certain tests. Here is a quotation from an official memorandum written on 14th October, 1918, to the Minister—

"Sir,—We are having a considerable amount of difficulty in obtaining suitable supplies of serum culture medium for special work on diphtheria, meningitis, etc. Up to the present date, when we required serum agar we have been in the habit of bleeding one or other of the staff of the department. This, as you can understand, is not an absolutely satisfactory method of obtaining sterile serum, and the donors of the blood are apparently getting tired of the procedure. It occurred to me that if we obtained two old horses, which should be purchased cheaply, we could keep these at the old laboratory, and be able to obtain supplies of horse serum in a sterile condition when required. Two horses would probably give a sufficient yield to allow us also to thus obtain a big bulk of our ordinary serum."

Hon. members will notice that I am not

making many comments on this correspondence. I am simply quoting from the letters and reports which by themselves show how up-to-date is the administration of the Health Department with regard to microbiology and bacteriology. No doubt, in the course of his reply the Minister will complain that Dr. Bradley was behind with his reports, but I would remind him that the doctor asked for an increased staff, and that his request was refused times out of number. I grant that he got some addition to his staff, but only 50 per cent. of what he required, and I want to show the cost of this neglect to the people of Queensland. In order to do so, I shall quote from a copy of an annual report by Dr. Bradley, which, for some reason or other, was suppressed, and was not made available. In that report, Dr. Bradley said—

"I have tried also to shorten, wherever possible, without encroaching, of course, upon the actual time occupied in actual examinations, the time during which a doctor, hospital, or department has to wait for his report. You will appreciate the great need for this, and it can be shown by reference to one specific case out of many which occurred on 17th January, 1918, as a result of the shortage of staff. A public hospital in a certain town submitted a specimen for examination for cancer from a woman twenty-five years of age. It was 9th March when the report was sent. The tumour was found to be a highly malignant one, but it is quite probable, in my opinion, from the structure of the tumour, that had that report been sent within the usual standard time of from seven to ten days, that the patient's life would have been saved, whereas it is almost certain that now the patient will die within the next six months or so with malignant disease. There are many other cases of this nature. When I took over this department fifty-one pieces of tissue submitted for cancer were waiting to be proceeded with. Some of these had been in the laboratory since October, 1917. Comment on such a state of affairs is needless. The staff, however, is still nearly 50 per cent. too small to undertake the work required."

The HOME SECRETARY: Don't you think that Dr. Moore ought to be arraigned for manslaughter on the evidence you have given?

Mr. SIZER: From my point of view, I am not attacking Dr. Moore.

The HOME SECRETARY: What are you doing then?

Mr. SIZER: I am attacking the official head of the Health Department. If the Government do not care about a matter of this kind, where a human life was wasted, and do not insist upon proper action being taken by the department, then they deserve reprobation. The extract I have just quoted is sufficient to show that the department is unworthy of the name of Health Department, and the sooner it is reconstructed or taken away from the control of the Minister altogether the better. I will be generous and say that I believe the hon. gentleman has too much work to do. But, in any case, he should be relieved of the Health Department. I come now to another report prepared by Dr. Bradley.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did he supply you with a copy?

Mr. SIZER: Yes, I got it from him. We have heard much about the existence of venereal disease in this State. No one deplores the existence of that disease or recognises more fully its seriousness than I do. I hold that everything possible should be done to prevent the spread of that disease, but the Health Department has been very slipshod in its methods of dealing with it, and the results have not been satisfactory. This is a letter which Dr. Bradley wrote in reference to this subject and others—

"Under my direction the examinations for diphtheria, which involved risk to the lives of many little children, received precedence in the work of the laboratory. This, I admit, was contrary to the view expressed by Dr. Moore—that the examination of the prostitutes should be undertaken first."

The HOME SECRETARY: Quite right.

Mr. SIZER: Quite right?

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. SIZER: Well, I am surprised at that interjection. The doctor points out that the cases of little children who were in the hospital suffering from diphtheria had to wait, and that the cases of prostitutes from the streets of Brisbane were to be taken first, and the Minister says "Quite right." If that is the hon. gentleman's view of the position, it appears to me that he has not a very clear conception of his duties. The medical profession now say that the reports from the laboratory are valueless. Whilst Dr. Bradley was there they sent along tests in tens and fifties and hundreds, and they said that the reports were valuable. Let us go a little further—

"Next to the diphtheria test, and several other life and death matters, the examination of the smears for gonorrhoea was given preference.

"You will see that the primary cause of delay was merely due to the fact that I protested, and, I may say, I protested very strongly, against slipshod work having the authority of my signature."

And he is to be commended for it—

"I was told on more than one occasion that I was much too particular. Perhaps I was, if the only need of the department was to have reports which would stave off the complaints of the loose women of Brisbane."

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Is the hon. member reading a private letter?

Mr. SIZER: No; I am quoting from a letter which appeared in the Press—

"The diagnosis of tuberculosis was similarly interfered with, owing to the fact that for a long while we were only able to spend a fraction of a minute to each examination.

"A letter sent to me by Dr. Kidston, for a while my assistant bacteriologist, dated 24th June, states—

"Sir,—To-day (Monday) being a fairly slack day, I was able to give an average of fifteen minutes each to the examination of gonococcus smears. As a result, four out of five showed typical cocci, as you were able to see for yourself. In

Mr. Sizer.]

the case of two out of four smears, it required twelve minutes' search to assure me of the positiveness of the specimens.

"Yours, etc.,  
"T. A. KIDSTON."

Had those smears been examined by the ordinary two-minute search or less, which, to save time or to get reports out quickly, might have been adopted, two cases would have been discharged teeming with infection. That went on during the whole time when there was not sufficient examination. The time which was taken was too short, and the reports which were sent out, if they were sent out at all, were valueless, and I say that for that reason Dr. Bradley is to be commended for not signing anything of which he was not absolutely certain. There is a specific case, and I say that the Government, if they are sincere in attacking this disease, must see that these examinations are carried out efficiently on standard tests, as scientific work cannot be done in a slipshod way. It must be done in a scientific way, or else not at all. I intend to quote later on to show how work had to be turned away—valuable work from military hospitals. Dr. Bradley was compelled to recommend that it be not accepted for the reason that they could not do it efficiently, because they had neither the plant nor the staff. The Minister will make much of the fact that Dr. Bradley was not engaged for research work.

The HOME SECRETARY: I do, most emphatically.

Mr. SIZER: Yet, in the terms of his agreement, which I have in my bag and will quote, there is a specific clause which sets out that he was to do research work on certain diseases when opportunity presented itself.

The HOME SECRETARY: Yes.

Mr. SIZER: But you sweated him to such a degree that he was not able efficiently to do his work.

The HOME SECRETARY: You have simply got Dr. Bradley's version.

Mr. SIZER: I have not. I have many letters—which I shall not be able to quote in my hour—in which Dr. Moore recommended Dr. Bradley to report to the Minister.

Mr. BRENNAN: He has turned round because he got the sack.

Mr. SIZER: He said that he would be shirking his responsibilities in the interests of the people of Queensland if he allowed these things to remain unknown.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why did he throw the serum down the sink when the people needed it?

Mr. SIZER: It is a pity the hon. member did not slip down a sink.

Mr. BRENNAN: You would go if I did.

Mr. SIZER: No, the hon. member would block it up. The hon. member should get inside one of those half-ton silos that he has said so much about. (Laughter.) In another report on the 19th July, 1918, Dr. Bradley mentioned a question which probably comes under the heading of research, and which shows the absolute dire neglect of the Government—neglect which calls for the condemnation of the whole people of Queensland

[Mr. Sizer.

in not having sufficient staff to enable research work to be done. I think that any man will admit that to apply science to anything is important; to apply it to medical work is absolutely essential. Were it not for the fact that science has been applied to medical work—were it not for research work, we would know nothing about diseases which in years gone by puzzled the medical profession and with which to-day we are well acquainted. Here were opportunities for research work—

"As it appears necessary to do so, I shall be clear on this point, and make the definite statement that the work of the laboratory as at present undertaken needs two extra assistants, and that the past and present methods of attempting work that has to be slummed over is deliberately deceiving the public who pay for my salary.

"I note your reference to my predecessor. I do not wish to discuss Dr. Harris, but I will remind you that he left this position to take up one on a lower salary, and also told me amongst others, and I think also the Ministers, very clearly his reasons for leaving."

The Minister said that he did not give his reasons.

The HOME SECRETARY: I say so now.

Mr. SIZER:

"These reasons, as far as I can gather, were that he was sweated, and although he applied repeatedly for assistance got none. In parenthesis, I may say that he advised me to go very carefully before I accepted my present position."

The HOME SECRETARY: If Dr. Bradley is no more reliable in other statements than that, you can cut him out altogether.

Mr. SIZER:

"I note also that the journals spoken of in my memo. as "Research" journals have not been allowed."

Will the hon. gentleman deny that Dr. Bradley asked for the expenditure of £10 for research journals in order that he might keep up to date and that the hon. member refused? How does the hon. member expect a scientist to keep up to date if he cannot be supplied with the ordinary journals of his profession, which would cost the department £10? And yet they are paying hundreds of pounds for political propaganda to Randolph Bedford. The hon. member seemed to regard Dr. Bradley as like himself, as one who never requires to read; but he did and so does every scientist.

Mr. BRENNAN: Was he the only man there?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; there were three others.

Mr. SIZER: He was the best man we have had in Queensland—

"The books which I have requisitioned are part of the ordinary fittings of any laboratory. Without them I must become out of date. I am amazed at this refusal to grant me books to the annual value of approximately £10, which books I need to keep myself abreast of the times in the department's interest."

In research work it is necessary that monkeys

should be used; they are part of the ordinary equipment of an up-to-date laboratory. These were not granted. The report goes on to say—

“Re my request for monkeys. Some while ago twenty-one children became ill with an unknown fatal disease in the Children's Hospital. At the same time there were many of these cases in Brisbane and the surrounding districts. Of the children in the hospital, seventeen died terrible deaths. I was approached by the hospital to do something to elucidate the nature of the condition, with a view to the preparation eventually of some satisfactory anti-serum or other treatment. I passed this letter on to you, and nothing came of it. Later, I applied to the Minister for monkeys, with a view to investigating further cases of this disease which may be expected next year. After many months this request is refused. In plain language, am I to understand that the Minister refuses to take steps for the protection of these children?”

That disease is known as the “X” disease. At the Children's Hospital there was a serious outbreak of the disease, and they applied to Dr. Bradley for his assistance to discover an anti-serum. In Sydney a similar request was made to Dr. Cleland, who held a similar position to that held by Dr. Bradley, and as a result of the wisdom of the Government of that State and their sense of responsibility, they allowed that officer to continue research work in connection with the “X” disease. With what result? That Dr. Cleland was able to announce recently that he had discovered an anti-serum that will prevent another outbreak with regard to the disease. That was the difference. Had the New South Wales Government adopted the same short-sighted attitude as that adopted by the Queensland Government, that disease would have been a mystery to-day, and it might have broken out again, and hundreds of children been swept away by it. Dr. Bradley goes on to say—

“Altogether, I have been refused every request I have made. Not on the grounds of want of money, but because, apparently, the Minister thinks that I do not know how to manage my own department.”

The HOME SECRETARY: I am sure he did not.

Mr. SIZER: I expect the hon. gentleman, who would not know a coccus from an elephant, thinks he does. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman seems to set himself in defiance of scientists of the highest order. Whatever qualifications the hon. gentleman may possess, I am sure he does not seriously consider himself a scientist, and yet he had the audacity to take upon himself the right to overrule a competent scientist—a man who knew his work, while the hon. gentleman knew nothing—and in fairness, was not expected to know anything about it.

The HOME SECRETARY: I acted on the advice of the Commissioner of Public Health.

Mr. SIZER: I am not afraid of saying here that I do not think the Commissioner of Public Health is much of an acquisition to Queensland.

The HOME SECRETARY: He is the head of the department.

Mr. SIZER: I do not complain of the Minister's lack of technical knowledge, because he is not expected to know, but he has no right to set himself up as an authority and overrule a man who does know.

The HOME SECRETARY: I took the advice of the Commissioner, who does know.

Mr. SIZER: Dr. Bradley goes on to say—

“There are only three possible alternatives for this laboratory. Firstly, to undertake the present amount of work and to perform it inefficiently. Secondly, to raise our staff so as to comply with requirements; or, thirdly, for the Minister to definitely and publicly decline to undertake certain work. Judging by your minute, the Minister has chosen the first course. If this is so, there is only one course open for me as an honest man who cannot consent to prostitute his science. I hereby, therefore, tender you my resignation, and wish to be relieved as soon as possible. You will also, perhaps, be interested to hear that in tendering my resignation I have no position to take, and no particular opening at the present moment available to me in this country. I state this so that you and the Minister and the public may understand that I must have a very strong reason for throwing up my present position worth £650 per annum.”

The HOME SECRETARY: That is a whine he ought to be ashamed of.

Mr. SIZER: If anyone ought to be ashamed, it should be the hon. gentleman. That shows that the man would not remain in the position and go on accepting the whim of the Minister. Had he wished, he could have done his work inefficiently, and the public outside would never have known anything about it. That is the sort of man evidently that the Minister likes; but when this man realised that he was not performing his duty to the State properly, he immediately resigned, and never considered himself for one moment.

Mr. CARTER: If hon. members on the other side had the same sense of duty, it would be a good thing for the country.

Mr. SIZER: Dr. Bradley afterwards withdrew his resignation because, in a conversation he had with the Minister, the Minister promised him everything he asked.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is a lie.

Mr. SIZER: It is not a lie.

The HOME SECRETARY: I say it is.

Mr. SIZER: I say he withdrew his resignation because the Minister promised to give him what he wanted.

The ACTING PREMIER: You must accept the Minister's denial.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must accept the Minister's denial.

Mr. SIZER: If I must accept it, I suppose I must; but I am only quoting from the report.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I did not understand the Home Secretary to state that the hon. member for Nundah was telling a lie.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is not parliamentary language, anyway.

*Mr. Sizer.]*

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the Minister was referring to the remarks of Dr. Bradley.

The HOME SECRETARY: I was. He misrepresented the case. It is a deliberate falsehood.

Mr. SIZER: I did not take the Minister's remarks as applying to myself. I was pointing out that Dr. Bradley must have had very strong reasons for resigning. If he had been a weakling, he could have remained there, but he acted as any strong man would have acted and resigned. At any rate, the Minister gave way—

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not.

Mr. SIZER: Will the hon. gentleman deny that Dr. Bradley consulted him after sending in his resignation?

The HOME SECRETARY: He had no right to consult me. It should have come through the Commissioner.

Mr. SIZER: Will the hon. gentleman deny that Dr. Bradley did consult him?

The HOME SECRETARY: I do not deny that.

Mr. SIZER: Will the hon. gentleman deny that, after that consultation, Dr. Bradley withdrew his resignation?

The HOME SECRETARY: He certainly withdrew his resignation, but not at my request nor at my wish.

Mr. SIZER: Probably no request was made, but because the hon. gentleman conceded to him all that he asked.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not; I can state that positively.

Mr. SIZER: I ask any reasonable man to judge whether a strong man, who had thrown up his position of £650 a year, would in a moment, after seeing the Minister, withdraw his resignation?

The HOME SECRETARY: If he thought that it was a false step.

Mr. SIZER: He did not think so, because, when he left Brisbane he was immediately secured by the New South Wales Government, in which State he did excellent work, and at the present time he has a practice in Sydney returning an income of over £2,000 per annum. Dr. Bradley informed me that, though he was making that income, he was prepared to sacrifice it and do scientific work, because, after all, he was a scientist.

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

Mr. SIZER: I want, in conclusion, to say, if I may be permitted, that there are many cases far more glaring than any I have mentioned, but time will not permit me to comment on them. I wanted to say that I think the time has arrived when we should have a Health Department which will deal with these matters, and the Minister should be relieved of the duties which are too great for one man to grapple with.

Mr. MULLAN: 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 Tuesday next.

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

[*Mr. Sizer.*