

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 1919

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 5 NOVEMBER, 1919.

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

PAPER.

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

Report upon Government central sugar-mills.

QUESTIONS.

OVERHAULING OF RAILWAY ENGINES IN CENTRAL DIVISION.

Mr. BERTRAM (*Marce*), in the absence of Mr. Forde, asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. How many railway engines were overhauled in the Central Division between 1st July, 1918, and 31st December, 1918?”

“2. What was the running number of each engine overhauled?”

“3. How long was each engine out of service while being overhauled?”

“4. What was the cost of overhauling each engine?”

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

"The information asked for will take some time to prepare. I would be glad if a week's notice were given. On second thoughts, I might be able to make the information available on Friday."

(Laughter.)

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: A significant afterthought.

CONSTRUCTION OF WEIR ACROSS CONDAMINE RIVER.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*) asked the Treasurer—

"Will he see that the construction of a weir across the Condamine at Lyndhurst, by Mr. C. E. McDougall, under the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act of 1910, is carried out under the supervision of an officer of the Crown, so that the necessary and proper flood gates shall be provided to prevent the silting of the bed of that river?"

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

"Before a license to construct the weir is granted, plans and specifications of the proposed work will have to be submitted for approval. The providing of means for preventing silting will be insisted upon."

EXTENSION OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. Is there an itinerant teacher available to supply the educational requirements of the children of those workers engaged in railway construction between St. Lawrence and the Proserpine?"

"2. If so, will he issue the necessary instructions for the taking up of this work?"

"3. If not, will he appoint an extra teacher for the purpose?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*) replied—

"1 to 3. The Department of Public Instruction is conferring on the subject with the Railway Department and the respective members for the districts."

CO-OPERATIVE WICKER FACTORY'S LIABILITY TO BLIND INSTITUTION.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Ozley*) asked the Home Secretary—

"With reference to the amount of £350 owing to the Blind Institution by the Co-operative Wicker Factory, responsibility for which was undertaken by the Federal Furnishing Trade Society, Queensland Branch, will he state what sums, if any, have been paid to date in reduction of that liability?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*) replied—

"No payment has yet been made, but the total due will be paid by the 1st February, 1920."

SURVEY OF MOUNT EDWARDS WATER CONSERVATION AREA.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. Will he state whether the survey of the Mount Edwards water conservation area has been completed yet?"

"2. If so, will he lay the report on the table of the House?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) replied—

"1. The survey is not completed.

"2. Yes, when available."

THIRD READINGS.

The following Bills were read a third time and were ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence, by message in the usual form:—

Governor's Salary Act of 1872 Amendment Bill.

Daraji Railway Bridge Bill.

Officials in Parliament Act Amendment Bill.

Fair Rents Bill.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as would otherwise prevent the receiving of resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in those Committees, and the passing of an Appropriation Bill through all its stages in one day."

I think hon. members will understand the necessity for the suspension of the Standing Orders on this occasion. It is the expectation that we shall have advanced sufficiently far with the business of the session to enable the House to adjourn on Friday evening next. In order to do that, it will be necessary to get a Supply Bill through. It will not be possible, therefore, to allow the ordinary stages to be taken in the introduction and passage of the Bill and the resolutions. So far as it has been practicable in the last year or two, the Government have enabled the House to avail themselves of the fullest opportunity under the Standing Orders to discuss a Supply Bill. The last Supply Bill passed through its ordinary stages here without the suspension of the Standing Orders. On this occasion it is necessary that the Bill should pass in one day, in order that the Legislative Council can deal with it before the time for adjournment arrives. Touching upon the proposed adjournment of the House, I think members on both sides of the House expect that there will be an adjournment in order that they may take part in the forthcoming Federal elections.

Mr. SZER: It is not our concern.

The PREMIER: It may not be the hon. member's concern, but the issues are fraught with very great concern to the people of Australia, and members of the State Parliaments would be taking a very small view of the case if they did not feel concerned with the result of those issues.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We have a right to expect the Financial Statement before adjourning.

The PREMIER: An opportunity will be afforded to hon. members on both sides to

express their views, and I think hon. members on both sides were afforded a similar opportunity on previous occasions when Federal elections were pending, and, especially under circumstances which materially affect the interests of the States, as well as the Commonwealth, it is only right that members of the State Parliaments should have an opportunity of expressing their views, and should not be tied up in Parliament by the close application to business such as would be necessary if the session went on in the ordinary way. The intention is that we shall adjourn on Friday night, if we are able to clear up the business-sheet sufficiently, until about the 6th January. It is necessary that we should meet Parliament early in January, for the financial business of the session has yet to be dealt with. Hon. members on that side have asked a number of questions as to the probable date of the delivery of the Financial Statement. It would be quite impossible to have the preparation of the Estimates completed in time to place the Estimates before the House before we adjourn. That may be unfortunate, but it is unavoidable. It was my wish that we should have the Estimates tabled before adjourning, even if we could not have dealt with them, but under the Standing Orders it takes some time to deal with the Budget, and a further seventeen days are allowed for a discussion of the Estimates, but it is impossible even to table the Estimates before the adjournment. Ample opportunity will be given, however, as is required under the statutes, for a full consideration and discussion on the Estimates and upon the finances generally before the session ends.

Mr. SIZER: After half the money has been spent.

The PREMIER: No more money has been spent that has been appropriated by Parliament, so there is not much in that contention. At any rate, it is better to defer that aspect of it until the motion to be moved later on, as at present we are only considering the suspension of the Standing Orders. Those matters to which I have referred are a sufficient justification for the suspension of the Standing Orders on this occasion. It is necessary to get a Supply Bill through without undue delay, and we could only have recourse to the ordinary time provided by insisting upon Parliament meeting again next week—this House and the Upper House as well. Therefore I move the motion I have read.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): I regret to say that I cannot accept the hon. gentleman's statement as a satisfactory one under the present conditions. This motion is unlike two motions of a somewhat similar character which have preceded it during the session—it is a "whole-hogger." That is to say, not only is it going to deal with the preliminary resolutions, but it is going to deal with all the stages of the Appropriation Bill.

The PREMIER: Precisely what your Government did on every occasion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Precisely what was done when it was necessary in the past. (Government laughter.) But on every occasion on which it was done by Liberal Governments the hon. gentleman and his colleagues fought it strenuously for whole sittings at a time. We could take up the whole afternoon without any difficulty in

quoting the hon. gentleman and his predecessor in the leadership of the Government and hon. members on the other side in objecting to this very objectionable practice.

The PREMIER: And we could take up the whole afternoon showing where you adopted a like practice on every Appropriation Bill in the past.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I defy the hon. gentleman to produce in the history of Queensland a single instance in which the Standing Orders were suspended to put through a third Supply Bill in the one year when the Financial Statement had not been delivered.

The PREMIER: I take up that challenge. I can show you where you passed a Supply Bill under such circumstances.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If you can, it was under very extraordinary circumstances. (Government laughter.) I personally remember one occasion when the Treasurer of this State delivered an interim statement, and that was by reason of the special circumstances of the day. If I remember aright, the hon. gentleman himself delivered an interim Financial Statement on one occasion. We are meeting to-day under extraordinary conditions. We have had no Financial Statement; we have had no interim Financial Statement, and we are not going to have one. The Government are going to take from Parliament practically the right that Parliament holds of controlling the expenditure of the State until, as they say, January. No date has been mentioned, and we do not know whether we will meet in January or whether we will not. Of course, we will have to meet when the Supply covered by the Appropriation Bill is expended, but I say the position is a unique one, and I venture to say that it is a position that we cannot accept. The position in regard to the finances is of almost extraordinary character. Never in the history of the State have the finances been in the position in which they are to-day. We shall have an opportunity of dealing with that question at a later stage of the proceedings, but I say we ought not to be engaged considering this motion at the present time, and I venture to say that the people of Queensland well know why the finances are in such an unsatisfactory position. The position of the Government, apparently, in regard to the finances generally and loan money is such that they are unable to take the country into their confidence. No doubt, meetings have been held downstairs, and perhaps our friends on the other side know something about it, but Parliament on the whole knows nothing about it, and the people who are entitled to the confidence of the Government have had no information whatever. The hon. gentleman says the reason for this resolution is the approaching Federal elections, and has taken upon himself to say that both parties in this House desire to take part in the Federal elections. All I can say, speaking for this side of the House, is that if the Government go on with the business of the State it is our duty to stop here, and hon. members on this side are prepared to do it.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Government interruption.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not realise the need for this special interest which is being taken in the approaching Federal

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elections by our friends on the other side. If I read certain statements this morning aright, it was proposed by the late leader of the Government and by the gentleman who is campaign director in connection with the Federal contest that unification is to be proposed and advocated by the Labour party of Australia. I would like to ask: Is it any part of the duty of officers entrusted by the people in connection with the State Governments to take part in the advocacy of unification? Are we not here to advocate State rights? Is it not for someone else to deal with the question of unification? We have practically been asked by our friends on the other side to join in an adjournment of the House in order that the policy enunciated by Mr. Ryan—including, as it does, unification—to go out and support it in defiance of our duties as State representatives.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mr. Ryan does not enunciate the policy of the Labour party, nor Mr. Tudor either.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not suggest that I am in the confidence of either of those gentlemen, and when I speak of Mr. Ryan I speak of the man who is leading the campaign in the interests of the Federal Labour party. I do not see any need for this adjournment. As the hon. gentleman has stated that it is proposed to adjourn the House on Friday evening in order that hon. members on both sides may take part in the Federal elections: as leader of this party, and speaking for the hon. member for Dalby as deputy-leader, I can say that no approach has been made to this side in regard to the approaching adjournment of the House, and any arrangements made have been made entirely by the hon. gentleman himself. We have seen vague paragraphs in the newspapers, and that is all the information we have; but it is only necessary for me to say that we are not parties, at any rate, to an adjournment of the House in order to take part in the Federal elections, and we certainly are not to be held in the slightest degree responsible for the delay in producing the Budget, and the information afforded to the public on that particular occasion. I strongly object to this resolution, because I say it takes me by surprise.

The PREMIER: It cannot take you by surprise, because I gave notice of the motion yesterday.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Of course, we got notice yesterday, but that is the first notice we did get. We are taken by surprise, and we are asked to deal in the short period of an hour or two with all the great questions that affect the interests of this State.

The PREMIER: Surely you must have been ready, because you were contemplating a want of confidence motion on the same subject, were you not?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not understand whom the hon. gentleman means.

The PREMIER: I mean the Opposition.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman has no right to suggest that the Opposition contemplated moving a vote of want of confidence. I do not see that there is any use in moving a vote of want of confidence; but it is our duty to let the people see so far as we can what the true position is, and we can only do that to the best of our ability on the information which the Government allows to come to our possession. At any

rate, so far as the motion is concerned, I intend to oppose it, as it is one that is not acceptable to this side of the House, and I disclaim any association with the Government whatever in the arrangement which has been suggested by the Premier as being the wish of both sides of the House.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I, too, desire to disclaim any knowledge of the arrangement. On the other hand, if the Premier will just turn his mind back to a few days in last week, he will remember that I asked him a question. I told him that certain rumours were current, and I asked him if there was any truth or otherwise in them, and I got the usual evasive reply.

The PREMIER: I gave you a truthful reply. I could not answer definitely then.

Mr. VOWLES: At any rate, I got no satisfaction. That bears out what our leader has said that we have not been consulted in any way so far as this adjournment is concerned.

The PREMIER: You have not been consulted, but you have been advised.

Mr. VOWLES: We are adopting a most extraordinary procedure, and one that is only adopted by this House on matters of very grave urgency. It is becoming more a practice than otherwise that we should suspend the Standing Orders. Such a procedure was always objected to by the Premier and his colleagues when sitting in opposition, and for very good reasons.

The PREMIER: And you always resorted to it yourselves.

Mr. VOWLES: It has been resorted to in the past in a case of urgency—(Government laughter)—but there is no urgency now. We have come here to transact the business of the State, and we are all here ready to go on with business, and we object strongly to this House rising before we get the Financial Statement. We know very well that there is an object in it—that hon. members opposite in going away electioneering are ashamed of their financial position, and they do not want to let us know the position, so that we cannot criticise them in public. In the past we have always been in the position of having the Financial Statement and no Auditor-General's report, but it is exactly the opposite this time; we have the Auditor-General's report but no Financial Statement to apply it to.

The PREMIER: You are never satisfied.

Mr. VOWLES: I certainly am not satisfied. I know the public are not satisfied, and they consider it is the duty of the Government to let us know where we stand. We see in to-day's paper that the expenses are on the increase. We are told by the Auditor-General that we must study economy. That is to be the watchword for the future, and we find the Government taking no notice of the warning of the Auditor-General. We are experiencing one of the worst seasons we have had for many a day, and when our finances, more particularly our loan funds, are in a parlous condition we do not know where we stand from day to day. As far as I can see, the Premier repudiated certain loans in America. I was told the other day by some gentlemen who were attending a local authority meeting that word came from the Treasurer to tell those representatives of local authorities that if they put their applications for loans in order there was plenty

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of money available. If that is so we would like to know where the money is.

[4 p.m.] Where is it coming from? Money does not grow on trees, and we want to know where it is, and how the affairs of the State are going to be carried on until January.

The PREMIER: Money does grow on trees.

Mr. VOWLES: Not the sort of money that you are accustomed to handle. At any rate, at this stage of the proceedings, I want to object, on principle, to this procedure being adopted, and to point out that, as far as I am concerned, in the absence of our leader, I have not been any party to what is going on.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Before this motion is put, I think the House is entitled to know the reason for the Treasurer taking up the most extraordinary position he is taking up this afternoon.

The PREMIER: In asking the House to suspend the Standing Orders?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Not in asking the House to suspend the Standing Orders only, but in asking the House to suspend them for the third time.

The PREMIER: Have you done it?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, but not for the third time.

The PREMIER: Yes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not conscious, as an ex-Treasurer, of ever having come down to the House and asking it to consider an adjournment over the Christmas holidays without first of all presenting the Treasurer's Statement. What is the reason for the Government withholding the Treasurer's statement, as they have withheld it on this occasion? Have they not had ample time with the various Under Secretaries and officers of the departments to get their Estimates prepared and put before the House? Surely they have had abundance of time, and there cannot have been any reason, from that particular standpoint, why they should not have prepared their Estimates for the House! I think the Opposition are perfectly right in asking the question this afternoon. We find, according to the last Statement, which I hold in my hand, as printed in the paper, two things. One is that revenue has not been shrinking—I admit some items of taxation have decreased—but, taking one department with the other, the amount of revenue coming in has been greater. We find another awkward thing, and that is that, whilst the railways have been producing to a much larger extent, and the revenue also has increased, on the other hand the expenditure is mounting up to an alarming extent. The Treasurer knows that that is the position to-day. What do we further find? The Government, during the past two years, have not been able to balance their accounts—not that they have failed to balance because there has been a shrinkage in revenue, because we know there has been piled upon the community increased taxation. From these returns which I have clipped from the "Telegraph," I find that, whilst at the end of October last the Government had a certain sum, not by any means sufficient for their requirements so far as expenditure and interest are concerned—yet with an increased amount of money coming in the amount to credit of the accounts at 31st October last

was less than it was at the same date last year.

The PREMIER: Would it not be more in order if you discussed this subject later on?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am pointing out that we should have information from the Treasurer, and should have the advantage of the Estimates, so as to know what the Treasurer is going to do. Has not the Treasurer, by interjection, quite recently, said that he is going to impose fresh taxation? He said that deliberately. Yet we are face to face to-day with the Treasurer coming down and asking us, in spite of the fact that revenue has increased by leaps and bounds during the period the Government has occupied office, as a result of taxation, to suspend the Standing Orders to carry him over till January, so that he can take part in the Federal election. I do not hesitate to say two things—and the Treasurer will have the opportunity of proving that I am wrong—one is that the Treasurer is afraid to disclose the public finances to the community, lest it may damage the chances of the ex-Premier at the poll. (Government laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL and OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer fears that it will damage the ex-Premier at the poll. The other thing is this: Are there not three by-elections impending? We know that the condition of things is such to-day that, if the Financial Statement had been laid on the table of the House, there would have been so much ammunition for those who choose to use it that it might very materially damage the chances of Labour candidates. (Government laughter.) So the convenient method is to come along, backed up by a big majority, to ask us to do something which will help to cover their tracks—I say that advisedly—and so that it will quietly put a cloak over the finances until the storm is past—until the elections are past.

The PREMIER: It is a very fine thing to put a cloak on when there is a storm.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is the position to-day, and it will take a good deal of patching to attempt to patch over their financing. I can only say that I think the country will at once be able to see the reason why this kind of thing is done. I think it is one of those things which can very safely be left to the judgment of the community generally.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I really marvel that the Treasurer can unblushingly stand up in his place in the House, and support the motion which he is moving by one of the most ingenuous and unsatisfactory explanations that could be made by a Minister in charge of such a motion.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: You are afraid to face the electors in the Federal contest.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman states that this should not have been a surprise to members of the House, or to members of the Opposition. Possibly it was no surprise to his own supporters; but, in view of the fact that question after question has been put to the hon. gentleman as to his intentions in connection with the financial position, and his invariably evasive replies, it has come as a considerable surprise

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to members of the Opposition, on account of the position which he always took up when sitting in opposition, that the hon. gentleman should now come down to the House for the third time and ask for an Appropriation Bill carrying us forward to the end of seven months before any Financial Statement is made or Estimates tabled.

The PREMIER: Did your Government never do that—ask for a third Appropriation Bill?

HON. J. G. APPEL: They never did it. It is unheard of in the annals of constitutional Government in this State, and the hon. gentleman knows it.

The PREMIER: I do not know anything of the kind.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In my opinion, if the hon. gentleman had been on this side, and any Government had acted in the way in which his Government had acted, he would have made a great outcry, and he would have had absolute justification for levying a charge against a Government which administered the financial affairs of the State in the way in which they have been administered by the hon. gentleman. In view of the disclosures in the Auditor-General's report—we need not go outside it—as to the financial ineptitude of the hon. gentleman as Treasurer, what reason can one offer as to his failure to make his Financial Statement before adjourning the House? He has given a plausible excuse as to the reason why he proposes to adjourn—that the issues in connection with the Commonwealth election are of such a nature that members on both sides of the House should take part in the contest. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that a Commonwealth election was pending, and would take place before the end of the current year.

The PREMIER: How did we know?

HON. J. G. APPEL: It was not a rumour merely, but it was known as a fact that such an election must take place. At the time the late Premier resigned his position as member for Barcoo and his position as leader of the party, it must have been known to hon. members opposite that an election was impending. We know the reason why the late Premier resigned his position. Even then there was time for the hon. gentleman to at least have presented his Financial Statement, and made his intentions known, and to have tabled his Estimates of Ways and Means. I have not the slightest doubt that the reason is, as has already been stated by the hon. member for Bulimba, that the disclosures which will be made in the Financial Statement are of such a nature—the hon. gentleman may smile—

The PREMIER: I am smiling at you.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He is not so happy. The disclosures will be of such a nature that, at an election, the people would condemn the present Administration or any Labour Administration, and prevent them from having any chance of continuance in office, not only in Queensland, but in any State of Australia.

The PREMIER: What nonsense!

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Labour party held themselves out as being the party which, above all others, would regulate the financial affairs of the State in such a way as to be above suspicion. Have they done so?

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Yes.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: The answer is "No," and we have only to go to the Auditor-General's review of the position in proof of that. The hon. gentleman cannot get outside that report of the Auditor-General. There it stands in black and white.

The PREMIER: What?

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Auditor-General's report on the financial administration of the Government—of the hon. gentleman who occupies the position of Treasurer. Then, again, why should hon. members who are engaged in different occupations have to come back in January? We are prepared to sit here until the business of the State is completed during the year for which Parliament is assembled. Why should hon. members who have, perforce, to occupy their attention in connection with their businesses, and who are prepared to sit until the business of the session is finished, be called back here in the hottest part of the New Year? For what purpose and object is it?

The PREMIER: To attend to the business of the country.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is our business to attend to the work of the country now.

The PREMIER: We are going to attend to it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman may refer in some patriotic way to the matter, and say that it is our duty to attend to the Commonwealth elections. I say that our first duty is to the State. We are here to attend to the business of the State, and it is our duty as an Opposition to see, so far as we can, that the financial affairs of the State, in view of the Auditor-General's report, are at least disclosed to the electors before the end of the current year, and not, as will be the case if we adjourn, permit seven months of expenditure before we have any idea what the financial proposals of the Government are, or see their Estimates of Ways and Means. It is as well that these matters should be discussed. I have no hesitation in saying that, if the Opposition were occupying the Treasury benches, and were guilty of such laxity in connection with their financial administration of the State, hon. members opposite would stand on beer and gin cases at every street corner and denounce them. And I say properly so. The Labour party in Opposition and the Labour party in charge of the financial affairs of the State, are two very different parties. I protest against the motion in the interests of the taxpayers. We must realise that we are getting on to the middle of November. There was lots of opportunity for the preparation of the Estimates, considering the fact that we did not meet until late in the year. The Labour party used to protest against the House meeting as late as July, but since they have been in power they have set the example of meeting later and later every year. They met the House in August of this year. The Government had plenty of opportunity for preparing the Estimates prior to meeting the House. What is the reason for not having the Estimates ready? We know the reason. The financial muddle in which the State has been involved by the present Administration has been of such a character that you have only got to go to the Auditor-General's report to see it at once. You cannot get beyond that report. The Auditor-General's report convicts the Government, and that conviction is of such a nature that we have a well-founded suspicion that

the reason for the non-tabling of the Estimates of Ways and Means, and the reason why the Treasurer has not made his Financial Statement, is because of the by-elections that are to take place, and because of the Commonwealth elections. We know that the tabling of the Estimates and Financial Statement would cause such a shock to members of the community, that it would materially and seriously damage those who are advocating the Labour cause.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition said that on no previous occasion had they suspended the Standing Orders to put the third Appropriation Bill through all stages in one day.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Pardon me, I said, "before the Financial Statement was introduced."

The PREMIER: The deputy leader of the Opposition made the same statement. The hon. member for Bulimba challenged me to show where he, as Treasurer, had ever asked the permission of the House to pass an Appropriation Bill on the third occasion in one session through all stages in one day. The hon. member for Albert practically said the same thing, and denied that such a thing had ever been done before. On looking at "Hansard" for the last session that the Liberal Government were in power—namely, in 1914—I find in regard to the third Appropriation Bill that the Standing Orders were suspended. This is the reference to it in "Hansard"—

"APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 3.

"ALL STAGES.

"On the motion of the Treasurer, this Bill, founded on the resolutions passed in Committee of Ways and Means, was passed through all its stages without discussion or amendment, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council by message in the usual form."

You cannot get round that. In the second session of the last Parliament when the Liberal party were in power, I find that Appropriation Bill, No. 4, was passed through all its stages in one day. The "Hansard" reference to the passage of the Appropriation Bill, No. 4, in 1914 is as follows:—

"APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 4.

"ALL STAGES.

"The Treasurer presented a Bill founded upon the resolution, and it was passed through all its stages without discussion or amendment."

Mr. MACARTNEY: That was the covering vote for the session.

The PREMIER: Yes, but what about Appropriation Bill, No. 3?

Mr. SIZER: That was after the Financial Statement had been disposed of.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman was not here, and does not know anything about it. Take the previous year, 1913, and you will find the index references in "Hansard" read as follows:—"Appropriation Bill, No. 1, all stages." "Appropriation Bill, No. 2, all stages." "Appropriation Bill, No. 3, all stages." "Appropriation Bill, No. 4, all stages." On each occasion they were all passed in the one day. I venture to say that if I searched "Hansard" for all the years that the Denham Administration or the Kidston Administration were in office, I would find exactly the same record—that Appropriation Bills were passed through all stages in one day. On those occasions we

used to protest, and we had a right to protest when we were in Opposition, against rushing through Appropriation Bills without discussion. Since we have been in office, whenever it was convenient to the House, we put the Appropriation Bill through the ordinary stages. The two previous Appropriation Bills this session were put through the ordinary stages. In the case of the first Bill the Standing Orders were suspended to constitute the Committee, but the Bill went through the ordinary stages afterwards. On other occasions it was not practicable to put the Bill through the ordinary stages. In regard to Appropriation Bills, this Government has given much more consideration to the House than the previous Government did.

Question—That the Standing Orders be suspended—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 28.

Mr. Armfield	Mr. Land
" Barber	" Lacombe
" Bertram	" Lloyd
" Brennan	" Mullan
" Carter	" Payne
" Collins	" Peterson
" Cooper, F. A.	" Riordan
" Cooper, W.	" Ryan, H. J.
" Dunstan	" Smith
" Fihelly	" Stopford
" Foley	" Theodore
" Gillies	" Whitford
" Gledson	" Wilson
" Huxham	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Smith and Mr. Whitford.

NOES, 16.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Petrie
" Barnes, G. P.	" Roberts
" Barnes, W. H.	" Sizer
" Bell	" Swayne
" Biphinstone	" Taylor
" Grayson	" Vowles
" Gunn	" Walker
" Macartney	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Biphinstone and Mr. Taylor.

Resolved in the affirmative.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

INITIATION.

The PREMIER, in moving—

"That the House will, at its next sitting, resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider of the desirableness of introducing a Bill to amend the laws relating to mining in certain particulars,"

said: The Bill is somewhat of a general mining measure formulated by the Minister for Mines for the purpose of curing certain defects that have been discovered in several Acts administered by his department, and also making provision for the better regulation of mines, better ventilation, introduction of regulations relating to the appointment of mine managers and inspectors, and making provision for prospecting for oil in this State. The Acts which will be amended by this Bill are the Mines Regulation Acts, 1910 to 1916, the Mining for Coal and Mineral Oil Act of 1912, The Petroleum Act of 1915, and The Miners' Homestead Leases Act of 1913. It is a Bill which can be more fully explained at the second reading and Committee stages. The measure deals with a number of details. There are no great principles embodied in it except the important matters referring to the conditions under which prospecting for oil are to be carried out in future. I will endeavour to give full information on the second reading of the Bill.

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

Mr. MACARTNEY: I ask the hon. gentleman how he expects the House to adjourn on Friday night if he continues to introduce a number of Bills in the last week. To-day we have had notice of two other Bills. This Bill is one of very considerable importance,

and yesterday a very long Bill [4.30 p.m.] was introduced by the Minister for Public Works. I can hardly realise that the hon. gentleman can expect these Bills to be dealt with and gone into fully if the House is to adjourn on Friday.

The PREMIER: It is an advantage to have the Bills introduced so that members can become familiar with their details.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I hope it is not intended to conclude all the business on the paper and the Bills now being introduced before Friday.

The PREMIER: I certainly would not expect the House to deal with this measure and pass it before we adjourn on Friday. At any rate, the Bill will be in the hands of members before then.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I hope the hon. gentleman does not expect to finish all the business on the paper before Friday.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That will give an opportunity for discussion later on.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

Upon this Order of the Day being called,

The SPEAKER left the chair, and was descending the steps of the dais, Mr. BERTRAM at the same time taking his seat at the table as Chairman of Committees, when

Mr. MACARTNEY said: Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker—

The PREMIER: He is out of the chair. You are speaking to the Chairman.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He has not been moved out of the chair.

The PREMIER: He moves out automatically when the Order of the Day is called for the resumption of the Committee of Supply.

Mr. MACARTNEY: He has been moved out of the chair on previous occasions.

The PREMIER: But we had not constituted the Committee on those occasions.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I can only regard this as something in the nature of sharp practice.

The PREMIER: No, it is not.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I would like—

Mr. BRENNAN: I rise to a point of order. I ask if the leader of the Opposition is in order in imputing sharp practice to the Government?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I stick to it.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the leader of the Opposition that the procedure is quite in conformity with the Standing Orders.

Mr. MACARTNEY: All I can say is that it is not in conformity with what was done on the occasion of the Appropriation Bill, No. 2.

The HOME SECRETARY: You know that is not so.

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Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not addressing myself to the ex-Speaker; I am addressing myself to the Chairman. I think this is extraordinary procedure, considering the special circumstances—that the Government should prevent, or attempt to prevent, discussion on grievances which we are entitled to discuss before granting Supply. Not only has the Government failed to table the Financial Statement and the Estimates in order to give members an opportunity of discussing the financial position, but Supply is going to be asked for, I understand, until some time in January. I cannot understand, Mr. Chairman, your saying that it is in conformity with the Standing Orders. I understand that the practice is where the Appropriation Bills, prior to the lodging of the Estimates in the ordinary way, come before the House, we have the opportunity of discussing grievances before the Speaker leaves the chair. On two occasions this session we have had this privilege.

The PREMIER: Because we had not constituted the Committee of Supply on those occasions, but the Order of the Day now is "Supply: resumption of Committee."

Mr. MACARTNEY: As far as I know this is a similar occasion to the last, and from my inquiries during the day I was not led to suppose that there was going to be anything different on this occasion from the practice on previous occasions.

The PREMIER: Take the occasion of the Denham Government on the third Appropriation Bill in 1914—the last year they were in office.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: But their Financial Statement had been tabled.

The PREMIER: But that does not make any difference.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The position was entirely different in the year the hon. gentleman speaks of—the Financial Statement had been tabled and a Committee of Supply constituted for the purpose of considering the Estimates.

The PREMIER: I rise to another point of order. I ask is the hon. member in order in raising this discussion when there is no motion before the Committee. I am quite willing to move a motion.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have been dealing with a prior point of order which I have raised, Mr. Chairman, if you will permit me to proceed. I understand the practice is that when the Governor's message comes down accompanying the Estimates, and they are ordered to be referred to a Committee of Supply, then there is an opportunity of discussing everything in the Financial Statement and the Estimates, but we have not had Supply constituted so as to consider any message from His Excellency in connection with the Financial Statement or the Estimates, and I submit that on this occasion the Speaker has left the chair improperly without giving us the opportunity to raise the question and obtain a decision upon it.

The CHAIRMAN: There is nothing in the point raised by the leader of the Opposition. The hon. member will remember that on the Order of the Day for the resumption of Committee being called, the Speaker leaves the chair and the Chairman of Committees takes it. That is in conformity with our Standing Orders. It has been done dozens of times.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have the practice in print, and the very first item is "That the Speaker do now leave the chair," and we now find those words struck out.

The PREMIER: In order to comply with the Standing Order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have no hesitation in saying that the Government fear discussion, and are taking steps to prevent the financial position being made public at the present time.

The PREMIER: I think there is no necessity to pursue the point. The hon. member has evidently discovered a "mare's nest"; and for one of the oldest parliamentarians to be so unfamiliar with the means by which the Committee of Supply is constituted and by which the Committee of Supply is resumed is most extraordinary on his part, and I am surprised at his raising the point and making imputations against the Government. On previous occasions, when Mr. Armstrong was Speaker, the question of the right of discussing grievances before the Speaker left the chair on the first constitution of Committee of Supply was raised, and we, who were in opposition, were pre-emptorily sat down, but we insisted on our rights and maintained them on future occasions. But on this occasion there was no necessity for the motion "That the Speaker do now leave the chair," for the reason that the Committee was simply resuming. The constitution of the Committee is performed by motion on notice after the Address in Reply has been carried: the Committee is then formally constituted and resumes from time to time without any motion, and there is nothing irregular in the practice now adopted.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If you look back you will find similar occasions to this one—

The PREMIER: The item then on the business-paper was the opening of the Committee. It is no use the hon. member pursuing that line of argument when he must realise that he is on the wrong track, and the suggestion that any trickery has been resorted to is most unworthy.

I beg to move—

"That there be granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1919-1920, a further sum not exceeding £2,250,000 towards defraying the expenses in the various departments and services of the State."

Perhaps I had better say that the Supply asked for on this occasion is what is considered sufficient to carry on until about the middle of January. The House will assemble, as I have already indicated, about the 6th January, and another Supply Bill may then be necessary to carry us over until the final Appropriation Bill is passed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I rise to oppose this motion, and in doing so desire to say that I still feel that this House has been improperly deprived of the opportunity of discussing grievances before Supply. In the exceptional circumstances there should have been no hesitation on the part of the Government to permit grievances to be discussed.

The PREMIER: The Government had no control. We had to conform to the Standing Order.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have had the example this session already of the Speaker

being moved out of the chair in connection with Supply Bills, and discussion was not questioned, and, as far as I understood the question, after making inquiries to-day, I was not led to believe that it was going to be any different on this occasion. I say there should have been no hesitation on the part of the Government to give the House and the country an opportunity of discussing grievances or of giving the information which they are entitled to.

The PREMIER: Can you tell me how the Government could have done that under the Standing Orders?

Mr. MACARTNEY: All I can say is that it was apparently arranged that Mr. Speaker should leave the chair.

The PREMIER: No such arrangement. The Speaker was never spoken to.

Mr. MACARTNEY: No opportunity was given to us of discussing it. I realise that a discussion taking place with the Chairman in the chair is of very little use, but the Speaker was hustled out of the chair before we had an opportunity of discussing it. (Government interjections.) I can only speak of what I saw. Hon. members can realise just exactly what took place. (Disorder.)

Mr. BRENNAN: I rise to a point of order. I think that the leader of the Opposition should apologise to the Speaker—

Mr. MACARTNEY: For what?

Mr. BRENNAN: Accusing the Speaker of being a party to dishonourable tactics.

The CHAIRMAN: I did not understand the hon. member to do so. For the information of the Committee as to the procedure adopted, I will read No. 160 of the Standing Orders. It says—

"When a Bill or other matter has been partly considered in Committee, and progress has been reported, and the House has ordered that the Committee shall sit again on a particular day, Mr. Speaker, when the order for the Committee has been read, shall forthwith leave the chair without putting any question, and the House will thereupon resolve itself into such Committee."

I think that will make the position quite clear to hon. members.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going to continue the discussion, and I realise that it is not for you, Mr. Chairman, to decide whether the Speaker has done a right or a wrong thing. What I complain of is that we have not had an opportunity of raising the point and discussing it with the Speaker in the chair. The Premier, before he sat down, raised an "Aunt Sally" in connection with the procedure in 1914. All I can say is that the charge I lay at the door of the Government is that the Financial Statement has not been presented, and the Government propose to adjourn the House until after the end of December, and it will probably be well into next year before we receive the Financial Statement and have an opportunity of discussing it, or before the people of Queensland have obtained the information which they are entitled to with regard to the finances of the State.

I intend to oppose the resolutions included in the procedure to-day on that account. I say it is most improper, and this is the first time it has happened in the history of

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the State, and the reason is quite clear—there is no question about it that the financial position of Queensland is in a most deplorable condition as the result of the accumulated maladministration of the Government over a period of four years.

Mr. WHITFORD: That is a lie.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not take any notice of interjections of that sort.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member for Burrum to withdraw.

Mr. WHITFORD: I have my opinion. I withdraw.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have had an increase of taxation which is beyond anything in the history of Australia. The taxation increase per head is something of a phenomenal character. We find that the cost of living has increased beyond anything in any other part of Australia under the Administration of the present Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that question.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Those are things which justify us in refusing to vote, for the administration of the Government, the amount which is included in this particular resolution. I say I have a perfect right to raise this question in that particular way. This particular appropriation for which the House is being asked is to enable Parliament to be adjourned in order that hon. members on the other side may take part in the Federal elections and to aid the late leader, Mr. Ryan, in connection with the conduct of that fight. No doubt during the course of that election we will find that representations are made in the Southern States as to the wonders which the Government under the late leader have worked in Queensland, and consequently it follows that if the Financial Statement had been delivered in the ordinary way we would have had an opportunity of discussing these matters fully, and the result would have been a considerable modification of the opinion of the people of Australia in regard to what has taken place in Queensland. Representations were made apparently on the part of the Government—certainly countenanced by the Government—in connection with the elections in England. Certain statements were made there of a most extraordinary and untruthful character.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I shall read to the hon. member Standing Order 161. That Standing Order provides—

“The Committee shall consider such matters only as have been referred to it by the House.”

We are now dealing with a specific resolution.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am giving reasons why there should not be granted to His Majesty on account of the services for the year 1919-1920 a further sum not exceeding £2,250,000 towards defraying expenses in the various departments and services of the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: The Chairman will understand that I am offering reasons why the House should not vote that amount. We ought not to enable the Government to suppress that information which the people ought to have—the true information which

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we ought to have in regard to the affairs of Queensland—in order that they may gull the people during the course of the Federal election. Surely that is a reasonable ground to take up! You seem disposed, Mr. Chairman, to limit the area of debate which, following on what has taken place, is hardly fair to the House.

The PREMIER: What do you mean by “what has taken place.”

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am referring now to the fact that we have been deprived of the opportunity of discussing grievances before Supply in the ordinary way.

The PREMIER: You have been deprived of no opportunity under the Standing Orders.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have no desire to run contrary to the Chairman in any decision he may give on the matter. At the same time I feel that we are entitled to discuss the financial position of the State and the actions of the Government in connection with the proposal to vote any sum which the Government have the right to expend in their Administration. The Government are asking us to vote quite a large sum of money to carry on the Administration until probably after the month of January, and I would like to know what is going to be the position of the public servants. I understand that Mr. Story, Commissioner on behalf of the Government, has made certain recommendations which it is the intention of the Government to give effect to. Mr. Story has made a very excellent report, and if the finances of the State justify it, I venture to say that the award is one which ought to be carried out. But by postponing the delivery of the Financial Statement and by proposing to adjourn the House over the early part of next year the public servants of this State are to be deprived of any advantage which is to be derived from Mr. Story's report, or the adoption of it, until that time.

The PREMIER: How do you make that out?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I venture to say the position is this: That if the Estimates had been presented and the appropriation granted by this House any increment which was given to the public servants would at once have been paid to them. They would get what we recognise as their usual Christmas box.

The PREMIER: The public servants will get what they are entitled to under the award and under the industrial agreement, and that embraces Mr. Story's classification.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I did not understand that the public servants are likely to get the increases granted under Mr. Story's classification until that report is confirmed by Parliament.

The PREMIER: That report does not come before Parliament. They get the increases under an industrial agreement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: It is going to be an industrial agreement between the public servants and the Government of the State?

The PREMIER: It is the usual practice as far as an award is concerned or an industrial agreement, to pay the rates fixed immediately the award is in force. That is the usual practice, and it will be so in this case. The public servants will get the full benefit of Mr. Story's classification without waiting till the Estimates are passed.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I quite understand that is so as far as an award is concerned. It

struck me as rather an extraordinary thing that the railway employees should receive their increases and the other branches of the service would not.

The PREMIER: The other branches of the public service will be paid.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They will all be paid on the same day.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Then probably there is not so much in my argument in that connection. I might refer to the rule laid down in regard to finance by the Premier himself and his colleague, the Minister for Railways. Apparently the rules which were laid down in those days are not applicable to to-day. We find it laid down in this way—

“Finance is a subject that is approached by the uninitiated with awe and reverence. It is enshrouded in darkness and mystery, and none dare try and penetrate the maze unless it be the banker, the big business man or the politician.”

Then they proceed to show that if a bread-winner earns £3 a week and spends £4 a week, he is on the way to insolvency, and then they say that the same rule applies to the State. They then refer to the deplorable financial story in connection with the finances of the Denham Government, and they say—

“The Denham Government is fond of talking of its surpluses. The word ‘surplus’ sounds pretty and inviting. It argues sound and careful Government. And, generally speaking, the ordinary elector does not analyse finance sufficiently to see the imposition of it all.

They point out that—

“Finance is the basis of government. It is also the test of Governments. Apply it to the financial records of the two parties who are now before you. The financial record of the Liberals is the financial recklessness that spells bankruptcy. Let the electors ponder over it well and compare it with that of Labour. Vote for sane finance and progress by supporting Labour candidate in every electorate.”

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACARTNEY: Those are the rules laid down at that time. Economy was the watchword of that occasion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you agree with that pamphlet?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I largely agree with that, but it shows that the hon. gentleman himself is by no means consistent. They then proceed to set out the history of the financial management of past Governments. It seems an extraordinary thing that in fifty-five years—from 1859 to 1914—the Liberal Governments had deficits totalling £4,219,000, and the question arises, what has the Labour Government done in the short space of four years? It has accumulated deficits amounting to £835,000. Those hon. gentlemen also point out in that pamphlet that the surpluses of the Liberal Government amounted to £2,600,843 in fifty-five years. And the question now arises what are the Labour surpluses? They have only had one, amounting to £34,000, handed to them by the past Liberal Government. It is on that that the late Premier is going to seek the suffrages of the Federal electors on the grounds that the Labour Government will be economical and will carry out the splendid rules of finance which were then laid down by the present Premier and his colleague, the Minister

for Railways. It seems an extraordinary thing that the Premier has not thought it worth his while, in moving this resolution, to give the country some information in connection with the present state of the finances. The figures published at the end of last month go to show that, instead of a deficit of £400,000 and upwards at the end of the next financial year, we may hope to have a deficit amounting perhaps to twice that amount. An award has been made by the Industrial Court which adds £200,000 to the wages bill, and that must be added to the losses of the Railway Department, probably bringing up the deficiency in the Railway Department to a very large sum. And we cannot lose sight of the fact that the condition of the country, through the drought that is prevailing from one end of Queensland to the other, will produce a very large reduction in the income tax returns for next year, so that we are faced, in all probability, with as huge a deficit as we have ever had in the history of Queensland, and one that will not add to the confidence of the people in the present Administration. The position that would be revealed on the presentation of the Financial Statement is one which would set the people thinking from one end of the State to the other, and supported by the Auditor-General's report, which points out the very anxious position of the present time, it would enable the people of Queensland to realise the position in which we are placed. It seems to go without saying that we are going to have a huge amount of taxation added on to the heavy burdens of the producer to-day, and that production will be seriously hampered and interfered with. Surely the Treasurer will realise that it is only a fair thing that he should give us at least some indication as to what the position is to-day, what the proposals for the future are, and also give us some information in regard to what loan moneys are going to be available for the conduct of the country's business during the next twelve months! During the last few days I have been travelling in trains, and I have heard it as having been stated by Government officials—the Government must not complain of my making reference to what may be fairy tales outside when they decline to give us that information which they possess—but when you hear it stated in the railway trains by responsible Government officers, that the Government are about to enter upon a large development policy of railway construction during the current financial year, and have upwards of £2,000,000 available, and when you find that the Treasurer has been asking local authorities to send in their requisitions for the work that they propose to undertake, with a suggestion that there is plenty of money available, surely it is a fair thing to ask that the House be taken into the confidence of the Government as to what the position of the Loan Account is, and as to what are the possibilities in regard to moneys required to carry on the development of the State for the next twelve months! Surely that is a reasonable proposition!

The PREMIER: There will be no refusal to give you the position.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The information has not been given, and the attempt to put this Bill through without giving that information is quite clear.

The PREMIER: No such attempt has been made or thought of.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If men in the train can talk about these things—

The PREMIER: I am surprised at your listening to tittle-tattle in the trains.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the hon. gentleman who possesses the information will not take us into his confidence in regard to the information we are entitled to get, we have to go to the best sources for it that we can. If we get information from that source—from men who are apparently responsible Government servants—we surely must believe that the Government have information which they are withholding from us, which they may have supplied to the Parliament downstairs, but which they refuse to supply to the recognised Parliament elected by the people. It is a position which is calculated to deprive any section of the people of any confidence in the administration of the Government. It is an extraordinary thing that we have to go to tittle-tattle, as the hon. gentleman says, for information with regard to the loan from America. It has been stated outside that a loan of £2,000,000 has been obtained from America for a period of three years, and for which the Government are compelled to pay a rate of interest averaging over 6½ per cent., with a lesser rate for the first year. Surely information of this sort is not going about without a vestige of foundation! The Treasurer has failed to give us that information, or any other information on the point, and before we can be asked to vote this or any other sum to His Majesty, we are entitled to ask for some definite information as to the finances of the State; as to what provision is made for the future, and what the people of the State may expect at the hands of the Government. I cannot help thinking that the hon. gentleman is highly pleased at the idea of getting into recess without giving the House and the country any information at all, and that he is highly pleased that there is any form of procedure which enables that to be done.

The PREMIER: I have heard that for the last five years.

Mr. MACARTNEY: We can only judge from the appearance of things that the hon. gentleman expected they would get through without giving the information. I say that it is a misfortune and a disgrace to the Government to treat the country and Parliament in the flippant fashion the Government are treating them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You complain every session, because you make the same mistake in letting the Speaker go.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Apparently, hon. gentlemen were quite pleased to get the Speaker out of the chair. As far as I can see, it was a hoped-for event.

The PREMIER: It would have been most illegal to attempt to detain him in the chair at that stage.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman is apparently adopting some of the hypocritical attitude of his predecessor.

The PREMIER: Does the hon. gentleman seriously say that the Speaker should not have left the chair at that stage?

Mr. MACARTNEY: The proper thing to do was to settle the point of order first, if there was a point of order in it. I sincerely think that we have the right to discuss grievances, and if the Government are in doubt,

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the hon. gentleman's procedure should have been such as to give us the opportunity to do it.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: He suggested himself that we would have an opportunity.

Mr. MACARTNEY: During the course of the motion to suspend the Standing Orders, the hon. gentleman specifically stated that certain discussion would be better left out on that motion, because it could be taken up at a later period. The hon. gentleman knew as well as I did that that opportunity was on the motion that the Speaker leave the chair, and he gave us to understand that.

The PREMIER: I did not. I said the opportunity was in Committee.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman apparently desired to burke discussion on what is a very important subject at a critical period in the history of Queensland. As far as I am concerned, in the passage of this resolution, or any other resolution, I do not propose to give the hon. gentleman any assistance whatever.

Mr. VOWLES: I desire to give some reasons why we should not consent to the motion. In ordinary business, a representative of a company, if he is asking shareholders for money, naturally shows them what it is for. He shows that there are funds from which those moneys are to come.

The PREMIER: Do you mean, when they propose to call up new capital?

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking of everyday business, and I say the business of the State should be run on commercial lines; and, if we are asked to consent to the passing of a certain sum of money, we should at least know that the money is there to handle. We are in the happy position to-day that the Treasurer has, apparently, something up his sleeve which he will not give to the House. If it is true that this loan money has been got from America or elsewhere—according to rumours which have come to the ears of the leader of the Opposition—it is very regrettable that the head of the Government should carry on in the way he is doing. Surely we, representing as we do very nearly half the people of the State, although we are such a small minority in the House, should at least know what is going on. It is a great discourtesy to every member of the Opposition to withhold this information. I know this much—and there is no tittle-tattle about what I heard—a gentleman who was a member of the Local Authorities' Association executive at Brisbane made a report last Friday night at a council meeting at Dalby, of which I am a member. He came back with the information to our council that it had come from the Treasurer that the local authorities should put their applications in order, as there was plenty of money available for them. I do not notice that the Treasurer is denying the statement.

The PREMIER: I am afraid you are not quite accurate. It must have been in reference to a particular application.

Mr. VOWLES: I suppose the hon. gentleman knows there has been an application before him for five years.

The PREMIER: No, you have not had one before me for the last five years.

Mr. VOWLES: It was made to the hon. gentleman by myself, and I told him at the time that, on account of it being war time, they would probably not wish to launch out,

as they might have other uses for the money. At any rate, we have been put off. We are now told, on the eve of an election, that the money is available, and that all we have to do is to bustle and get it. We would like to know where that money is coming from. If all the money required by the local authorities in Queensland is available, the Government must have struck oil somewhere. I do not know whether the Government have been lucky in winning a Tattersall's sweep. At any rate, they appear to have got money in some way. These statements are made just before an election. Whenever an election is coming on there is a suggestion made that all you have to do is to ask and you will receive, but we find that the promises made before the election are not fulfilled after the election. I think anyone who studies the financial position of Queensland to-day must feel alarmed. I do not want to pose as an alarmist, but I would like to know what the position between the Government and the Savings Bank really is. The last time we saw a statement from the Treasurer in the Auditor-General's report, on the 30th June last, there was a million of money there which the Government had taken over from the Savings Bank. We would like to know whether that money has been repaid, or whether the Government have borrowed another million. It is held at call, but, unfortunately, the position is, that if the Government has not got the money when the call comes it may put it off and make arrangements for another million to be got at call. We should know where we stand in that respect. The Treasurer is not interjecting as he usually does. The House should be given every confidence, and no honest Government should go forth on an electioneering campaign with information in their possession which they are withholding from the people, and which the people should know, particularly when they are going to make capital of that information to gain support. We are asked to go away at the end of this week, and return sometime in January. I know that it is highly desirable that the money should be voted to the public servants, who should not be left without their salaries, whatever happens. But surely we are entitled to know where the money is coming from! How are we going to carry on if the money does not exist? We are entitled to receive this information, and I am not going to cast my vote for the appropriation of money when it is quite possible that the money is not there to be applied. We are told, on page 6 of the Auditor-General's report—

"There is now a world-wide demand for economy in respect to public expenditure, and, in view of the deficits of the past three years, together with the information conveyed by the figures in general appearing in the report, it is obvious—if the financial stability of the State is to be maintained—that the gravity of the present situation and the risk in regard to the future call for thoughtful reflection."

What position do we find ourselves in now? We have seen the last bi-monthly return of the Treasurer, and we find that the advice of the Auditor-General is being ignored. The expenditure is on the increase. They are going further and further into the mire. Notwithstanding the fact that we are going through one of the worst years so far as drought is concerned that Queensland has

experienced for twenty years, the expenditure still keeps rising. Remember, too, that the drought is still continuing, and one of the State's biggest assets is in jeopardy owing to the large number of stock we have on the State stations. All this information is being kept back from Parliament. If this dry spell is going to continue, then we are going to lose a tremendous amount of value on the State stations.

Mr. BRENNAN: How can we help it?

Mr. VOWLES: You should follow the advice of the Auditor-General.

Mr. BRENNAN: You cannot fight nature and drought.

Mr. VOWLES: When you are having drought that is not the time to increase the expenditure, but rather to decrease it. That is what you have been asked to do by the Auditor-General. I know that comparisons are odious, but if you make a comparison between this year and the year 1914 you will see that the expenditure in 1914 was £6,962,515. The expenditure has been increasing year by year, until this last financial year we spent nine and a-half millions of money, or over three and a-half millions of money more than the Liberal Government spent in their last year of office. In spite of the big revenue that the Government has received, they came out last year with a debit balance. Is it a fair thing that we should be asked to vote money to an extravagant Government? It is only right that we should take this opportunity to discuss grievances. They are not grievances but actual facts which exist so far as the Auditor-General's report is concerned. We are getting into an extraordinary position as regards the practices of this House. The Treasurer and the Government front bench have now adopted a policy of doing unconstitutional and illegal acts, and coming to this House afterwards to sanction them. According to the Auditor-General, the Government spent £1,000,000 last year in unforeseen expenditure. Unforeseen expenditure cannot be helped, but unforeseen expenditure should be within reason, and when it gets up to £1,000,000 it is outside reason altogether, and contrary to the statute we have governing our finances. It is contrary to all precedent. You will remember, Mr. Bertram, that many years back we had a general election, and the whole crux of it was whether the Government acted in a constitutional way or not. The Government voted without authority the necessary money to pay the salaries for the time being.

Mr. BRENNAN: That was the excuse put before the people. We wanted to get the Liberals out of power.

Mr. VOWLES: I am glad the hon. gentleman admits it was an excuse. We are shortly to have three by-elections in Queensland, and we are also to have a general election in which the whole of the people of Australia are interested. Mr. Ryan, late Premier of Queensland, is coming before the people of Australia, and he wants to put forward his financial record and other records before the people of Australia as a reason why he should be put at the head of the Commonwealth Administration. At the same time, here we are in this House, members who know all about his record, yet we are being deprived of the right to discuss those records—records which apparently there is a keen desire to hide.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: I am referring to our financial record. The Financial Statement giving the financial transactions for last year is not forthcoming. Am I not right in assuming that this Government are holding back the Financial Statement for a purpose? I am not saying that they are doing anything dishonest. Hon. gentlemen opposite will say that it is political tactics. The hon. member for Toowoomba said just now that they raised the constitutional question as an excuse to get the Liberals out. Here we find, on another occasion, that they are not prepared to bring the truth forward so that it can be discussed. If we only knew what our real financial position was—we can only imagine what our real financial position is at the present time—it would be something. It would be an example to the rest of the Commonwealth. I personally object to these moneys being paid over until our railways are properly managed and properly handled. I might refer to the cases of stealing which are constantly going on in the railways. I mentioned one case before, and I have now got another case. I had the papers given to me yesterday where an unfortunate man whose property is mortgaged to the Government Savings Bank was pressed for money, and he managed to get together £56 worth of skins. He handed these in at the Dalby Railway Station, and his consignment note shows that the skins were properly bound up and properly labelled. They were consigned to a reputable firm in Brisbane, Messrs. Mactaggart and Co., but those skins cannot be found. That man has to lose the difference between £10 and £56. I quoted another case where £147 worth of skins were stolen. If you will remember, Mr. Bertram, there was a prosecution in the Railway Department some little time ago at a place called Tara, when a clerk who was implicated in the stealing said that he was coerced by other persons. He said there was a gang of thieves in the Railway Department and he could not help the position he got into. I know that police reports have been made from time to time about pilfering in the Railway Department, but they never get any satisfaction for their reports. Why? Are the Government afraid to do their duty? If these are the conditions which obtain in the Railway Department in Brisbane, why should we vote the money for the services of that department? With regard to the services that we get from that department, it is the rule, and not the exception, for trains to be late these days, and they are not only late, but hours late.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BRENNAN: What is the cause of it? Bad water.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think that bad water causes the trains to start late. The trains start one and a-half hours late. I am talking about their starting late—not finishing late. I will give hon. gentlemen something to think about. There are other reasons why we should object to passing this money. We are asked in this Chamber, and hon. members in another place have a motion on record asking for information regarding moneys paid to a gentleman who is a member of the Upper House. If we voted this money now some of it would be devoted towards paying men during election time. There may be a lot of electioneering agents and they will be paid for out of the moneys

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subscribed by the people of Queensland to bolster up Mr. Ryan's cause. If we cannot get the records of expenditure we cannot find out how much Mr. Bedford is receiving from the Government. Why should we vote this money and let the Government carry on those practices in public life? We are on the eve of a Federal election. People outside are being alarmed because at this late stage of Parliament, almost the end of the year, no Financial Statement has been forthcoming. They are alarmed in this direction, because we know there is going to be a big deficit, and we are being told by the Premier that it will mean further taxation. Taxation is odious enough when one's business is going on in a prosperous way, but when that business is done, and when one's stock are dying, when one's cattle are being depleted and ruin is almost staring him in the face, he naturally likes to know what he has got to face so far as the Government is concerned. It will be seven months from the end of the last financial year before the public will find out what the taxation is going to be, and if the taxation will be retrospective again. That is another objectionable feature of this Government. They inflict retrospective taxation on the people. Here it will occur again, and the people will be asked to find the money which will not be forthcoming. I say it is very unfair to place men in a false position like that. It should be the function of the Government to let the people know immediately what their obligations are so far as the State finances are concerned. I do not propose to take any further time. My time has almost expired. There are many matters referred to in the report of the Auditor-General with regard to State enterprises which I would like to refer to, more particularly in reference to the purchases which have been made.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. VOWLES: I know I would be out of order in dealing with that matter. Perhaps, though, some of the moneys we are asked to vote now would be devoted to carrying on the State enterprises, which will never pay so long as the Government have the handling of them. We are asked to vote money towards the State fish shop which is losing handsomely every week, and is going to continue losing. Why should not the Government realise the inevitable like other Governments have done and decide that it is not a good policy to have a State fish shop. The other day they had a good catch of 6 tons, but it took nineteen days to get that catch, and when brought up it did not realise enough to pay the wages of the men or anything near it, let alone the wear and tear of the plant.

Mr. BRENNAN: They are only exploring.

Mr. VOWLES: I should say that they were out fishing. All these things are concerned in this vote which we are asked to pass today, because portion of the money will be devoted to the administration of this service. The Government should realise that they have made mistakes, and if they will not do it it is up to us to try to hold up their votes in order to impress them in a forceable way. So far as the Warra mine is concerned, I notice that the Government have the temerity to charge the £47,000 of a loss on that mine against the consolidated revenue. How do we know they are not doing it so far as other losses are concerned? We do not know what the future is going to bring forth. If the hon. gentleman will not give us his

Financial Statement and will not give any valid reasons for not presenting it, we will come to our own conclusions as to the reason of it. We will put our own construction on it, and that will be that as this Government is going out electioneering it will not be good business for them to table the Financial Statement, because it will let the people of Australia see the desperate straits that the Government have got Queensland into. I know their propoganda will be that their State ventures have been a huge success, but if we had the Financial Statement we could show what the enterprises are, and that is a failure.

The PREMIER: You have got the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. VOWLES: We have got that report but we cannot discuss it. I would like to discuss a number of the State enterprises, particularly the Babinda Hotel, which had a turnover of £16,000 for a profit of £120. There should have been a profit of £5,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You would rob the boarders.

Mr. VOWLES: You can see that they did rob the boarders. The dining-room and the billiard-room were also robbed.

The PREMIER: You want to rob them of another £5,000.

Mr. VOWLES: No. The ordinary prices are charged for liquor at the Babinda Hotel.

The PREMIER: What do you call "ordinary prices"?

Mr. VOWLES: The ordinary price at Babinda or any other hotel.

The PREMIER: Less than Cairns?

Mr. VOWLES: I could not say that; I do not know what the prices are there. But, as far as the quarantine camp is concerned, you made a profit of 47 per cent. out of the unfortunates who were compelled to go there, and if you do not call that profiteering, I do.

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

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think the Committee have a right to insist on getting from the Treasurer a statement as to the position of the finances generally, because the fact remains that practically all branches of finance, as far as Queensland is [5.30 p.m.] concerned, are included in the Statement—loan, trust, &c. I want to draw the Treasurer's attention to a statement he made some little time ago to me in connection with these very matters which are now under consideration. When last discussing the finance, I sought certain information, and he told me deliberately that it had been published. The hon. gentleman was either absolutely ignorant of his department or he wilfully side-tracked the question. In answer to a question put by the hon. member for Warwick, the Treasurer admitted that that particular statement was not then made out at all, nor had it been published—there is reference to it in "Hansard"—and, as a matter of fact, he deliberately side-tracked the particular question.

The PREMIER: Read what I said, instead of making vague innuendocs.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know I am not in order in reading from this year's "Hansard," but with the consent of the House I will read what the hon. member said by interjection. He said this—

"Because that information is available

to all members equally. It is published quarterly."

The PREMIER: That is so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not published at that particular time—9th October—it is published now.

The PREMIER: Is it not published quarterly?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, in this particular case it is published every four months, but on that occasion the hon. gentleman deliberately side-tracked the question.

The PREMIER: My statement was absolutely and completely correct.

HON. W. H. BARNES: As a matter of fact, the figures which he said I should have been able to get were not available on that particular occasion in connection with the returns which he said were available.

The PREMIER: Which returns were they?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He knows which returns they are, and he deliberately refused to allow the officers of his department to furnish me with the information, because he said I could get them from the quarterly statement.

The PREMIER: I said you could get them in those volumes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And it is absolutely in keeping with what the hon. gentleman is now trying to hide from the public.

Mr. BRENNAN: You have not substantiated a case yet.

HON. W. H. BARNES: But I am going to do so. What is the position in connection with the Loan Fund? I am going to quote from the figures, as far as available to members of this House—I cannot quote any others. But let me, first of all, draw the attention of the hon. member to the reply he gave me on the 31st October, and I am not aware of what may have happened since then. I asked the question—

"1. Has he since 30th June last received any further amounts of loan money—(a) from the Commissioner of the Savings Bank, (b) from the Commonwealth Government, (c) from any other source?

"2. If so, will he state the respective amounts obtained, and from whom received?"

And the answers were—

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

So, as far as possible, I have got information to date in connection with Loan Funds. The Auditor-General tells us, on page 8 of his report, that the amount available on Loan Account on 30th June was £1,393,383. Lest someone may say I am misquoting, I will read from the Auditor-General's report. On page 8 the cash balance at the 30th June, 1919, is shown as follows:—

	£
Q.N. Bank, Brisbane (Current Account)	1,023,537
Under Public Depositors' Relief Act—	
Q.N. Bank	116,916
Australian Bank of Commerce	6,129
E.S. and A. Bank	1,365
Bank of England, London	245,440

Making a total of £1,393,388

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I have not included the shillings or pence in any case. I will now quote from more recent figures; the Treasury returns as appearing in last Tuesday's "Telegraph." A statement is made there that the expenditure on Loan Account for four months—that is to the end of October—was £1,206,961. In quoting these figures I am entirely dependent upon the information I can get from sources such as this, because, as the Treasurer was not courteous enough to give me figures on a previous occasion, I am not going cap-in-hand to ask him to furnish me with figures, but I shall be able to draw my own conclusions, as far as possible, and the Treasurer will be able to tell the House whether I am right or not. If there has been an expenditure on Loan Account of £1,206,961, and if there have been no further receipts, in accordance with the answer he gave me, it is a very simple matter to find out that at the present moment, or at the commencement of the month, without accounting for any moneys that may have come in on Loan Account since then, that Loan Account is down to about £186,427, and let the public of Queensland know that the expenditure on Loan Account last month was over £300,000. The fact remains that the Treasurer cannot deny my statement, and unless there are some moneys which he has not advised us about, he has not a month's money to carry him on. I say it is a proper question to ask at this time how is the Treasurer going to finance during this month—let alone the other months which must pass by—when this motion is carried? It is the solemn duty of this House to find that out, because it is perfectly certain that unless there are some moneys coming in, to which no reference has been made in this House, and which have been arranged for during this month, the Treasurer must be absolutely stranded as regards Loan Account.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You are forgetting the good old Savings Bank.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am going to point out the facts and figures as far as I know them, but the Treasurer has the opportunity of placing the position before the House. What is the conclusion which the public and the members of this Committee must come to with regard to these things when the Treasurer sits down and refuses to reveal the position of the finances, when he has every right to do so.

The PREMIER: We do not refuse, neither have we refused.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Both the leader and the deputy leader of the Opposition have asked for information—

The PREMIER: I am waiting to hear what you have to say, then I will reply.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very glad if my remarks will have the effect of bringing the Treasurer to his feet, and if that is the case, then I will not have spoken in vain.

I want to quote from page 16 of the Auditor-General's report, and to draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Trust Accounts have been gradually going to the bad. According to the report I find that—

"At the 30th June, 1917, the cash balance was £1,781,709. At the 30th June, 1918, the cash balance was £1,178,286. At the 30th June, 1919, the cash balance was £953,061."

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Again I am leaving out the shillings and pence. That shows that the cash balance has dwindled to about one-half in two years. Does the Treasurer deny that? Does he say that the Auditor-General has made a statement which is not correct? In connection with the moneys that are held, the Auditor-General says, on page 16—

"To arrive at this balance, allowance has been made for the deposit of £1,000,000 placed at call with the Treasurer by the Commissioner, Queensland Government Savings Bank; were this amount excluded, the aggregate cash balance would show a debit of £46,938 0s. 4d."

That is a very extraordinary position for the Government to be in. They have practically had to go to the Commissioner of the Savings Bank and ask him to finance them—on one occasion to the extent of £1,500,000, and on another occasion £1,000,000 which is at call, whatever they may be worth.

The PREMIER: Did you never use the Savings Bank funds?

HON. W. H. BARNES: We never used it in the way the hon. gentlemen have used it. We have never been in the position of having moneys of that kind from the Savings Bank at call.

The PREMIER: Of course you have. You certainly could not have had deposits from the Commissioner, because there was no Commissioner in those days.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has to prove it, and it is not so.

The PREMIER: What is that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: You are making the charge, not I. I say that the State has never been in the position of having a million of money at call, and why is it done?

The PREMIER: You are merely evading my question.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of replying. It is done because of the extremists in the Government, and is done because, at the present moment, the Premier is trying to save his ex-colleague, who is now director of something else, and in order that he may be able to conduct the campaign in a satisfactory way from their standpoint. According to the Auditor-General's report, on page 6, our population has increased by 5.6 per cent.; the receipts have increased by 30.7 per cent., and the expenditure has increased by 32.2 per cent. May I quote, too, from some of the information which was given to the public by the present Premier and his colleague, the Minister for Railways. Just listen to it. One of the statements made in addressing the public, which was very gullible on that occasion, was—

"Loans may be very necessary for reproductive works, but is it any wonder that our debt amounts to £52,000,000; that our debt per head of the population is over £80?"

I want to ask what the debt is to-day. If the Treasurer will turn up the Auditor-General's report, page 20, he will find that it is £65,581,121. Those men who were going to put us on a sound financial footing have gone up from £80 per head to about £120 per head, and the total amount of loan money

has increased from £52,000,000 to £65,000,000 odd. And then might I read another beautiful quotation. It is as follows:—

“Do you know that a man who has a wife and family of four pays £18 in interest on loans every year, which means 7s. per week? Don't you think the system should be altered?”

I want to ask what the Treasurer, who poses as the friend of the worker, the true democrat—the true democrat in name only—has done in connection with these loan matters? What has the Treasurer done to lighten the load which is being carried by the worker? The loan has been piled on again and again, and I am right in saying that the position, so far as Queensland is concerned in that particular regard, notwithstanding the increase in loan moneys, is worse than it has ever been in any period of the State's history. We find that, in order to try and keep men employed, from unforeseen expenditure they had to spend, during the last financial year, about £600,000. If you turn up the Auditor-General's report you will find further that the increase in expenditure—take, if you will, from the meat shops—the increase there has been enormous, because there are so many men unemployed. Why are they unemployed? Because there is a Government in power that does not know the elements of finance, and they have pursued a policy of drift, drift, drift, and now they want to skedaddle as soon as possible, in order to hide the true position from the public. Taxation receipts increased by 190.5 per cent.; railways by 5.04 per cent.; and other receipts by 8.3 per cent. Notwithstanding the tremendous increase in taxation; notwithstanding what has been shown here in connection with the amount of moneys that have come in, and the large increase of revenue since 1914-1915: still we are going to end another year, apparently, with a deficit, unless a further load of taxation is put on, and the Treasurer has promised that he will do it, and I expect those behind him will soothe him on to do it.

Mr. RIORDAN: Tax the proper people.

HON. W. H. BARNES: You can tax and tax until you tax the community right out. That is what is happening. We are driving men from the primary duties of life—men who have in the past been helpful to the community. The whole thing shows that, notwithstanding the land tax last year produced £578,253—that tax did not exist in 1914-1915—we are going on at such a rate that this year is going to show a bigger deficit than any previous deficit in the history of the Ministry.

The PREMIER: You are very pessimistic.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am taking the figures as they are revealed.

The PREMIER: Not as they are revealed; you are manufacturing them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that there are certain figures revealed, unless the “Telegraph” newspaper has lied, because those figures are supplied by the department.

The PREMIER: I am disputing your calculation with regard to the Loan Fund.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have made the calculation on the figures in my possession, and the hon. gentleman will have an

opportunity of pointing out wherein they are wrong. Here is another quotation—

“Does a business man take a loan from a banker in the same way? Is it the sort of finance that young Queensland and young Australia stand for?”

Here, on the eve of an election, is that the finance that Queensland stands for? A finance in regard to which only on one occasion—that was for a month—were they able to show a surplus.

The PREMIER: The next year showed a surplus, too.

HON. W. H. BARNES: How was it brought about? Turn up the columns of the Auditor-General's report, and you will find that certain moneys accrued and due by the Railway Department were not paid.

The PREMIER: How do you mean “accrued and due”?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Does the hon. gentleman deny that the Auditor-General drew attention to the fact that about £100,000 that should have been included in the 1915-1916 returns were not included as a debit against the department?

The PREMIER: Certainly, I deny it, and you cannot show that it is so.

Mr. BRENNAN: Bowled out again.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Auditor-General says, “Had the practice of previous occasion been followed—”

The PREMIER: It was a “cronk” practice that had been carried out on previous occasions.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not a “cronk” practice. It was the practice that exists to-day. The position to-day is perfectly clear that the State of Queensland is in a tighter corner than it has ever been in its history.

Mr. BRENNAN: What for?

HON. W. H. BARNES: By having a Government and hon. members like the hon. member for Toowoomba squeezing it and helping men outside to squeeze it also. The circumstances to-day are such that men on this side of the House have a duty to perform to the country. Let me close by giving another quotation which I saw is a sound one, and this was signed, as was the other statement, by E. G. Theodore and J. A. Fihelly. It is as follows:—

“Finance is the basis of government; it is also the test of Governments. Apply it to the financial records of the two parties who are now before you. The financial record of the Liberals is the financial recklessness that spells national bankruptcy.”

If that were true, what is the financial record of the Labour Government represented by the Treasurer? I say their financial record is one of absolute bankruptcy, and it shows that the Government are absolutely incapable of dealing with those positions that have cropped up. It seems to me that the policy of the Government at this juncture is a kind of Dickens's Micawber—we will adjourn; we will put a blanket over the business until the elections are out of the way, and Micawber-like we will hope something will turn up. That has been their policy in connection with the purchase of State stations; signing promissory notes practically in order to purchase stations, and in that way to try and get over some of their difficulties. They have shown their absolute

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incapability of dealing with the affairs of the State, and I hope that the Treasurer will at least be able to disprove some of the statements I have made, because it is important that the State should know exactly where we are; and, in any case, I ask the Treasurer to let us know the true position.

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

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I am opposed to the Committee passing this resolution, and one of my reasons for opposing it is that the Treasurer has not, by means of a Financial Statement, given the Committee any explanation as to how he proposes to raise the money. He has not given any reasons to the Committee showing that that increase is not additional to those which are contained in the Estimates which were passed last year. On the discussion on the last Appropriation Bill, I asked the Treasurer whether it was proposed that the payments which were to be made out of that appropriation would exceed or whether they would be the same as those provided for on the Estimates which had been passed by the Chamber, and his answer was that the payments would be made in accordance with the Estimates of the previous year. According to the "Telegraph" of Tuesday evening, 4th November, I find, under the items "Expenditure," that that promise has not been carried out. The following is an extract from the "Telegraph":—

"The following is a comparative statement of expenditure of the State of Queensland during the month and four months ended 31st October, 1918, and 31st October, 1919, respectively."

And in connection with the schedule, there is an increase of £6,000 odd—a very considerable increase on the Estimate of the previous year and which we had no opportunity of discussing.

The PREMIER: There is no discussion on the schedule.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That is another reason why this grant should not be made, because the hon. gentleman has given no explanation why that item, which cannot be discussed, has been increased.

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

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Minister practically told us that, so far as the schedules were concerned, this Committee had no voice.

The PREMIER: What I said was that the schedules are not open to discussion in the House on the Estimates, because the schedules are already appropriated by Parliament.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It comes to the same thing. One of the reasons why I object to this motion being passed is that the Minister has given no information regarding the increased amounts, which are more than double in some cases the amounts on the previous Estimates. The hon. gentleman gave no explanation of the increases to the Committee when he asked us to approve of the expenditure of £2,250,000. As the hon. gentleman gave us an undertaking that the expenditure would be practically on the same lines as the previous Estimates, that is a cogent reason why we should object to grant the amount now asked for until some information is vouchsafed with regard to the large increase of expenditure. Then, the

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estimate of expenditure in the Home Secretary's Department was very considerably exceeded. We have an increased expenditure in connection with the Department of Public Lands from £17,000 to £22,000, and in the Department of Agriculture and Stock from £6,000 to £8,000. In the Railway Department the increased expenditure is not so large. Then, in connection with the Loan Fund, there is an increase from £174,915 to £249,000. In view of the undertaking which was given by the Treasurer, it becomes the duty of the Opposition, which has to exercise criticism on these matters, to demand a full explanation of the increases before they consent to the granting of any further funds which may be improperly expended, and in a manner not in accordance with the promise given by the Treasurer. We find that the Auditor-General, on page 2 of his report, states—

"The amount of £313,507 16s. 10d., which was actually received from this source, and made up as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
Income tax ...	193,564	7	8
Land tax ...	119,943	9	2

was not applied towards the reduction of the previous year's deficit, but merged into the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the past year (1918-19). Had these collections been applied in the manner indicated by the Treasurer, the deficit on last year's transactions would have amounted to £485,495 19s. 10d."

Then, he further points out that the accumulated deficits in the Consolidated Revenue Fund at 30th June last were—

	£	s.	d.
"On account of 1917-18 ...	409,451	13	5
On account of 1918-19 ...	171,988	3	0
Total ...	581,439	16	5

for which, so far, no provision has been made."

In view of the failure of the hon. gentleman to observe his compact with reference to the expenditure of the last Supply granted by this Chamber, and having regard to the statement made by the Auditor-General with respect to a compact which he considers was made by the Treasurer in connection with an amount which was received from revenue, and which was to be earmarked for a certain purpose, we must naturally view the request for this vote with a considerable amount of suspicion, when we have not had any information as to how the money is to be expended. We know that the Auditor-General makes special reference to unforeseen expenditure. I would like some information as to how much of this amount which is asked for the Treasurer proposes to apply to unforeseen expenditure. I protest against the lax methods of business in the Treasury by the present Treasurer in connection with unforeseen expenditure. It simply means that the House is losing control of expenditure which it should control. We are advised in the Press that the Government has commandeered practically the whole of the meat supplies of the State. Does the Treasurer propose taking them in an illegal manner? To my mind, it bears that aspect, because the preamble of the proclamation says that, owing to the war which is still in existence—

The PREMIER: So it is.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is necessary that the supplies should be commandeered by the State.

The PREMIER: Do you say the war is not still in existence?

HON. J. G. APPEL: This is a very serious matter for the producers of the State. I want to know if, under cover of this appropriation, the hon. gentleman proposes to do this great and signal injury to the producers of the State. By giving him this large sum of £2,250,000, we are placing in his hands, owing to the methods which have been adopted with reference to unforeseen expenditure, the necessary funds to do this signal injury to the producers of Queensland, and not alone to the producers, but to every member of the community. If the whole of our meat supplies are commandeered, there can be no export of that great product.

The PREMIER: Who says there can be no export?

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the State commandeers the whole of the meat supplies. According to the statements which appeared in the Press—the hon. gentleman has given us no information on the subject, so that we are bound to take the statements which have appeared in the Press—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The "Courier" or the "Standard"?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not think the hon. gentleman who has interjected places much reliance on the "Standard." It has contained some very interesting news concerning himself lately. The Treasurer has also had some very unkind cuts in that rag.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Obviously you read that part of the Press. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: Of course, I read it. I read everything. I want to see to what depth of degradation a paper can descend for parliamentary purposes. You realise that if the State commandeers the whole of the meat supply of the State it must injure the producer. It must injure our credit overseas, for the simple reason that the prices obtained for our cattle in Queensland are regulated by the market price which we receive for frozen beef overseas. If there is no export of meat overseas, then there is a decline in the price of cattle on the hoof.

Mr. WHITFORD: What prevents them from exporting?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Before we place this sum of money in the hands of the Treasurer, we want to know if he intends to continue to deal with unforeseen expenditure and expend large sums of money before they have been approved by this Committee. Certainly, the State was not paying the value of the beef to the producer. This State was not receiving the same value that the producers in the Argentine and Canada were receiving. The hon. gentleman who controls the finances of the State knows quite well what it means to the producers of Queensland to commandeer that meat, and it behoves the members of the Opposition to make full inquiry before we grant this appropriation. We should ascertain what it is proposed to do with the credit which we vote before we agree to it. Furthermore, I would like to know whether it is proposed to repay the Government Savings Bank out of the money which we are asked to appropriate this evening. We find from the Auditor-General's report that the sum of £1,000,000 sterling has been placed to the

Treasury, and if it were not for that £1,000,000 being placed there, there would be a deficit. Is it proposed to obtain a further credit from the Government Savings Bank? This is what the Auditor-General says on page 16 in reference to the cash balances—

"To arrive at this balance, allowance has been made for the deposit of £1,000,000 placed at call with the Treasurer by the Commissioner, Queensland Government Savings Bank; were this amount excluded, the aggregate cash balance would show a debit of £46,938 0s. 4d."

The Treasurer may smile. He may seem happy. He may not be alarmed, but it is an alarming state of affairs when we realise that the Treasurer and the Secretary for Railways wrote an essay or a treatise upon finance.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You ought to read it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have been reading it. I notice that the hon. gentlemen urge people to travel on a financial road which the hon. gentlemen who wrote it do not travel upon themselves. That is the conclusion I have come to. On another occasion, when the discussion may be broadened, I hope to quote a few extracts from that treatise which will be of considerable interest so far as financial matters are concerned, according to the theory of hon. gentlemen opposite who now conduct the affairs of the State.

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

The PREMIER: I listened very carefully this evening to the speeches made by leading members of the Opposition regarding the public finances. The leader of the Opposition seems most concerned because I did not make a statement outlining the position so far as the finances are concerned. I might point out that there is no desire on the part of the Government to suppress information relating to the public finances, nor has there been any attempt made to prevent hon. members from getting hold of information that is available from time to time and should be in their possession if they were sufficiently interested to inform themselves as to the exact state either of the Loan Fund, Revenue Fund, Trust Fund, or any other of the public balances. Hon. members opposite seem to adopt the view that this Government is deliberately burking an examination by members here of the financial position. There is nothing to justify such an accusation.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We are waiting for some information, all the same.

The PREMIER: The Government has carried out its obligation in regard to making available all the information relating to the public accounts. I want to call the attention of members to this fact: Every month Treasury returns are issued. They are issued, not only for the use of members, but for the general public also. They show in almost minute detail the expenditure in the various departments and the revenue received on the various accounts.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They show the totals.

The PREMIER: They show the totals, and they give a comparison with previous years.

Mr. MACARTNEY: They do not say what the money is expended on except in a general way.

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The PREMIER: It may not be in as detailed a way as hon. members desire. I do not know that hon. members want every minute detail of expenditure under every heading. That information has never been given before, and it will be most inconvenient to give it every month, while it would be of no use to hon. members if it were so given. Information is made available and it is supplied to the Press, notwithstanding the charge of hon. members opposite that we are attempting to cut out something or other. The Treasury returns are made available monthly, and every quarter a comparative statement of the public accounts is made available to the public through the "Gazette." It is also available to every member of this House who is sufficiently interested to peruse it. These quarterly statements are most complete. They are also supplied to the Press. They are so complete that I suppose they make reference to practically every vote that is operated on in the various departments. They show the receipts and expenditure under the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and they make comparisons with the corresponding quarter of the previous year. It shows a complete analysis of the Trust Fund expenditure and of the Loan Fund expenditure, and gives full details of the public balances. What more information can hon. members want than that?

Mr. VOWLES: Has it been issued up to date?

The PREMIER: Yes. It was made available to members, and published in the "Gazette" of the 31st October.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It is a month late. Don't forget that.

The PREMIER: What is the hon. gentleman trying to get at. Hon. members opposite say that the information is not available, and I say it is, if hon. members know where to look for it. That seems to be the chief difficulty with hon. members on that side in regard to the financing of the public accounts for the last financial year. Hon. members say that they have had no opportunity of understanding the position, but the Auditor-General's report has been in their hands for weeks past. In that report members will find that the Auditor-General has examined the accounts to the minutest detail. Hon. members say that the Government suppress information. If this Government had denied to the Auditor-General the statement which has to be made under the Audit Acts, the Treasurer's statement disclosing the transactions on the various accounts; if they said we had denied that to the Auditor-General or would not give him access to the accounts of the Government, then there might be something in their charge. But anyone can see that that information was not denied to the Auditor-General, as it is all included in his report. That report has been in the hands of members earlier this year than it has been in the hands of members for some time past. With regard to the charge that the Estimates are delayed, and the allegations of hon. members that there is something behind it, I can say that there is nothing in the charge at all. As a matter of fact, although it is late in the session compared with the date on which I have had the honour of making the Financial Statement in previous years, it is not later in the session than the Treasurers of previous

Liberal administrations delivered their Financial Statements.

Mr. SIZER: We are going to adjourn, though.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is to be congratulated if he is going to adjourn. (Laughter.) The delay of the Estimates does not prevent a comprehension of the situation so far as the public finances are concerned, nor does it prevent a discussion of them here if hon. members want to expose anything. It does not prevent a complete understanding of the whole situation so far as the finances are concerned. I may say that the Estimates only give members the anticipated expenditure for the current year.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That is the opportunity we want. It gives us the opportunity to ask questions.

The PREMIER: You will not be denied that opportunity. Before the session closes full opportunity will be given, not only to peruse the Estimates, but to discuss every department.

Mr. MACARTNEY: Not before the Federal elections, and not until the by-elections are over.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman's complaint is that the Estimates are a little late this year. The hon. gentleman knows that in previous years the Financial Statement has been delayed until very late in the year, and so far as the date is concerned it is only a few days later this year as compared with the date when the Estimates were made available under the previous regime.

Mr. MACARTNEY: You cannot minimise it like that.

Mr. VOWLES: How do you make provision for that extra £700,000?

The PREMIER: Provision will have to be made for it.

Mr. VOWLES: How are you going to do it? That is what we want to know. How are you going to levy taxation?

The PREMIER: Whatever means are resorted to will have to receive the approval of Parliament. Hon. gentlemen cannot complain about that. It does not take away the necessity for parliamentary approval, whether the Treasurer imposes fresh income taxation or land taxation.

Mr. VOWLES: It will be retrospective all the same.

The PREMIER: The deputy leader of the Opposition made a great complaint about the increasing expenditure, and, in referring to the finances, said that the expenditure was millions more than it was a few years ago. No one can deny that the expenditure is more, but it is utterly impossible to keep the expenditure to the same level which existed in 1905 or 1910 or any previous year, for the reason that the cost of the services has immeasurably increased. Wages have gone up, and the cost of materials used in the various departments has also gone up. Do hon. members opposite blame us for that?

Mr. VOWLES: Look at how much more revenue you are getting!

The PREMIER: Are we to be condemned because costs are increasing? Do hon. gentlemen say that we should deny increased wages? We have had to pay 3s. a ton extra

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for our coal which the Commonwealth ordered us to pay.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Which you did not pay.

The PREMIER: Which we did pay. That raises an interesting point, seeing that hon. members are prepared to base their condemnation of the Government on that score. There is increased expenditure everywhere. The Government has endeavoured on every possible hand to keep down expenditure, but the Commonwealth Government, which hon. members opposite support and apologise for every day, came out a couple of months ago with a peremptory order increasing the price of coal by 2s. 9d. per ton. The Queensland Government were asked to pay the increased price, but we are not paying it to-day.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You just said you were paying it.

The PREMIER: I said that we were paying the 3s. a ton increase. This is the second time that the Commonwealth Government have increased the price. The memories of hon. members are very short if they cannot remember that this is the second time the Commonwealth Government have increased the price. So far as the second increase is concerned, which they ordered us to pay, it would have cost the State over £80,000 a year extra in fuel for the Railway Department. Yet the hon. members blame this

Government because the expenditure [7.30 p.m.] is increasing year by year.

Are we to run the engines by some miraculous scheme without fuel? That is one item, and the examples could be multiplied a hundredfold. With regard to gas: The public departments are large users of gas, and notwithstanding that a referee was appointed for the purpose of examining the claims of consumers for reductions, and for the purpose of going into the question of price, the Commonwealth Government, without waiting for the referee's decision, arbitrarily increased the charge that has to be paid by the Government as well as other consumers.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What does it run into?

The PREMIER: It does not matter what it runs into; it illustrates clearly, firstly, that there is an inevitable increase in price, and secondly, that the Commonwealth Government are prepared to interfere in order to give the profiteers an extra profit.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: I do not know whether the hon. member thinks this is mere electioneering stuff, but let me remind him that the 3s. a ton increase in the price of coal was supposed to be sufficient to enable the coalowners to meet the increased wages under the award, but the increased wages amounted to £390,000 a year and the increased price of coal £1,350,000. The hon. member for Dalby made a rather slighting reference to the State Hotel at Babinda, drawing his own conclusions about profiteering in State enterprises, and said if he had the matter in hand he could have shown another £5,000 profit.

Mr. VOWLES: In the neighbourhood of £5,000.

The PREMIER: So could this Government have done that, and it is clearly shown by the Commissioner for State Enterprises' report, which illustrates that we could easily have shown an extra £2,448 profit. This is what he said—

"I estimate the saving to the public,

on meals and accommodation, at a minimum of £1,200, on the basis that other dining-room tariffs are 2s. 6d. per week in excess of ours—although the excess in the majority of cases would be a good deal more. The gain to the public owing to the reduced prices charged in the bar, as compared with other hotels in the district, I estimate at £1,248."

It is, therefore, apparent from the manager's statement that the public has benefited, owing to the low rates charged at the State Hotel, at least as follows:—

	£
On meals and accommodation ...	£1,200
On bar trade	1,248
	<hr/>
	£2,448

If we only adopted the principles advocated by hon. members on that side, we could have added that to our profits, thus using State enterprises for profiteering purposes. The hon. member for Bulimba made a number of statements which I should like to traverse. He made a certain calculation with regard to the present position of the Loan Fund, which disclosed a complete lack of knowledge of the situation and a misuse of the data at his disposal. If I followed him correctly, he stated that the Loan Fund was in credit only about £150,000 at the present time.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I said according to the figures which I had.

The PREMIER: According to your own figures. This is the position with regard to the Loan Fund: The cash balance disclosed in October was £368,693, which is more than double what the hon. member gave us credit for; but there is this which he did not take into account—a balance due to the State under an agreement with the Commonwealth, and which we are now entitled to draw, of £690,000.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I asked you a question about that?

The PREMIER: And I answered it correctly. That money is available and can be drawn upon as required. Then there are moneys due by the Commonwealth on account of loans to the State for expenditure on soldiers' settlement, which also can be drawn as required, amounting to £240,190, so that there is available under the Loan Fund at present, or as required, £1,298,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Surely you are not going to use the soldiers' funds!

The PREMIER: Let me deal with one question at a time. Hon. members opposite seem to be uncomfortable because we have to defray expenditure on soldier settlements out of our own fund. In addition to the amount actually at credit, and immediately available, we expect during this financial year to get by way of repayments £230,000 approximately, and then the sale of debentures over the counter will, doubtless, realise another £50,000 until June next, and the Commonwealth has offered to make available for expenditure on local authority works £414,000, making a total of expected credits to the Loan Fund of £694,000, which brings the grand total up to £1,992,382. It will be seen, therefore, that the position is not nearly so deplorable as the hon. member hoped for, or, at any rate, stated. I notice also that the hon. member is constantly referring to this matter. He seems to think

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it most deplorable if the Loan Fund is not in credit to the extent of £1,500,000. I have heard him on more than one occasion quote the state of the Loan Fund during his own occupancy as Treasurer. But it would be a bad policy to keep huge sums of loan money unemployed. Our Government so regulates things that the Loan Fund is replenished from time to time, which is better than having a large sum available on which we would be paying 5½ per cent. to 6 per cent. interest and on which we would be only getting 1½ per cent. from the Queensland National Bank.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you remember when we turned down the £2,000,000 Commonwealth loan, how you upbraided us for not having accepted it?

The PREMIER: Because you had eventually to go cap in hand to Mr. Fisher. The hon. member also made an assertion which was not accurate, and that was that during our occupancy of office we have only had one surplus, which applied to only one month in the year. But we had two surpluses—one in the first financial year, and when I reminded him of that—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What does the Auditor-General say?

The PREMIER: I will tell you, if you will wait. We also had a surplus in the next financial year, and when I reminded him he said, "What did you do with the accounts?" What we did was this: We brought the accounts down to a reasonable and sane method of handling, and departed from the "cronk" methods adopted by the hon. member. Let me explain what he used to do—I admit he was not the author of it; the scheme was started under the Kidston Administration, when, I think, Mr. Hawthorn was Treasurer. In one particular year there was a likelihood of a very large surplus which, if the Government disclosed, they would have to pay into the Public Debt Reduction Fund, and would lose the use of it for revenue purposes. They transferred portion to Trust Funds, and used the rest of it sending wires to every public officer who operated cash credit in the country, asking them the amount of cash expenditure which had been incurred to date, and they brought that amount down and included it in the expenditure for that year—a grossly improper thing, and one which was condemned by the Auditor-General of that day, as will be seen in his report. Not only was that offence against reasonable, sane, and honest dealings committed on that occasion, but the hon. member pursued it year after year. On the first opportunity we had we laid it down that no expenditure would be brought into the year except that for which the acquitted vouchers reached the Treasury, because, until then we had no official knowledge and no official document to show that the expenditure had been incurred.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And notwithstanding that—

The PREMIER: We had a surplus of £34,000 that year. The hon. member made further wild charges, and the hon. member for Dalby, by his interjection just now, was apparently doubtful of my reply. The hon. gentleman referred to the State public balance, and this is not the first occasion he has done so; he has accused us of being so careless that our funds are in a parlous condition, and tried to show that with £1,000,000

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on deposit at the Savings Bank at call, it is an unsatisfactory piece of business, and that nothing happened in his time to compare with it. I want to call attention to the real fact applicable to the time when he was Treasurer. Take the year ending 30th June, 1912. They had the use of Savings Bank funds just as much as if they were on deposit at call—exactly the same thing. It had to be returned to the bank; it was not invested in Government securities, but for all practical purposes it was on deposit at call, and they had £2,408,518, and the current account at the Queensland National Bank was only £951,646. Deducting that from the amount at the Savings Bank, what was the position? I say, if there is any parlous position now, the position then was certainly a parlous one. In 1913 they had £2,640,436 Savings Bank money, and the amount at credit to current account in the Queensland National Bank was £1,404,251. And if that was deducted it would leave a considerable overdraft. In 1914 they had £3,069,827, and at current account in the Queensland National Bank £932,083. Was that money not at call, if the Savings Bank wanted it, in those years? Was the position then any different from what it is now in that respect? Not the slightest, and I defy the hon. member to show any difference.

The hon. member for Albert, Mr. Appel, called attention to the higher expenditure, and seemed to be under the impression that I misled him on the last occasion the Appropriation Bill was before the Chamber, but that was not so. He asked whether the moneys to be appropriated could be expended on the basis of the Estimates of the previous year, and I answered in the affirmative. That is the usual practice—to make the money available on the basis of the old year's Estimates until the new year's Estimates have been approved by Parliament. It does not mean that we can keep the expenditure down to the previous year, because new awards are made which have to be observed. I do not know whether I could deduce from his argument that we should not pay the new awards until the Estimates are passed—that would be very unfair to the public servants. The hon. member went through the Treasury returns as published in the newspapers, and showed the increase department by department, and apparently disapproved of it. The only possible way we could keep money down to last year's expenditure until the Estimates were passed would be to deny to the public servants the increases they got under the award, and to decline to pay increased price for coal or any other increased prices. Members can see that is impossible, and the statement I made is quite accurate. It does not mean that we can keep expenditure down to the exact amount of the previous year. The hon. member for Albert also spoke about the unforeseen expenditure, and he seemed to think that this Government have been responsible for a wild orgy of expenditure from the unforeseen expenditure votes, and that we ought to be condemned, and that we have set a practice which is very undesirable.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Does not the Auditor-General say so?

The PREMIER: The Auditor-General mentions the matter, and I have no objection to refer to the Auditor-General's report on it. The hon. member himself, when he was

Treasurer, expended more money in connection with unforeseen expenditure than this Government has expended. I want to point this out in regard to the expenditure from Loan Fund, that that is a fund that necessarily in difficult times has to be drawn upon to defray unforeseen expenditure, and unless we resorted to that practice it would lead to great hardship. Take the case of the unemployment early in the year. We could easily have kept down to the appropriation by refusing to start public works, but that would not have relieved the unemployed situation. I do not know whether hon. members would advocate that. That would be a most inhuman policy. Here was an opportunity of hurrying up public works—public works that had been approved by Parliament—various railways or local authority expenditure already ratified and approved of—we had the opportunity of exceeding the Parliamentary vote and thus creating employment. Does any hon. member suggest that we should not have pursued that course? That has been entirely responsible for the unforeseen expenditure from Loan Fund. With regard to Trust Funds, the explanation is that when the appropriation was settled last year it could not be foreseen what stations it would be necessary to purchase during the course of the year. Parliamentary sanction has to be sought on all those items. But the main thing is the unforeseen expenditure is from Consolidated Revenue Fund. Everyone will admit that the Consolidated Revenue Account has a very direct bearing upon what the taxpayers of the State would be called upon to do, and if there was any reckless expenditure during the year from Consolidated Revenue Account, then the taxpayer would have to make it up, so that unforeseen expenditure from consolidated revenue is the really serious thing. During the year we have had to pay anything up to £100,000 beyond what was appropriated, because of the influenza epidemic. Could anyone have evaded that expenditure, except at the expense of those who suffered from that epidemic? Then distress caused by industrial dislocation, drought, and various other things necessitated the expenditure of relief funds. That could have been saved if we turned the people adrift to starve on the streets. Out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund we had to expend, in addition to the amount appropriated, a sum of £327,791, but the hon. member for Bulimba, in his last year of office, exceeded his appropriation from consolidated revenue to the extent of £438,400, and yet hon. members on the other side have the cool effrontery to accuse this Government of denying Parliament the control of expenditure, and by reckless expenditure, without regard to any authority, of creating a very undesirable position, although a Nationalist Government was responsible for a greater unforeseen expenditure from Consolidated Revenue Fund than this Government has ever been guilty of.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You have not quoted the Auditor-General's report.

The PREMIER: I have just quoted that in 1914-15 the unforeseen expenditure from consolidated revenue was £438,461; in a previous year it was £314,243, and in the following year £284,021, under the hon. gentleman's regime.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Quote page 6.

The PREMIER: Do you deny the figures that I have quoted? The figures that I have

quoted are the figures that apply in this case. The Consolidated Revenue Fund was called upon last year for unforeseen expenditure to the extent of £327,791, and £100,000 of that was on account of the influenza epidemic.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Do you deny that the £621,000—

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman apparently does not like attention being called to this matter. I am quoting the unforeseen expenditure from consolidated revenue, and showing that the hon. member was guilty of wild, reckless unforeseen expenditure, because in the last year of his regime it cannot be said that contingencies arose that warranted the expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds. The influenza epidemic cost £100,000 last year, relief cost £30,000 to £40,000; and there were other incidental expenses. The price of coal increased, and concessions to returned soldiers, to whom we granted free passes over the railways during the period of their final leave, cost this Government during the last month £32,000 in one sum, and that was unforeseen, because it was not appropriated.

Mr. VOWLES: It is only a book entry.

The PREMIER: It appears in unforeseen expenditure.

Mr. VOWLES: But you never spent a penny of it.

The PREMIER: If that is so, then the exact expenditure in connection with the unforeseen expenditure is less than appears here.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does that show in your railway revenue?

The PREMIER: It is shown in the railway revenue, but it is shown in unforeseen expenditure also. Here is an extraordinary financial doctrine being promulgated. Because the Government issue these passes it is said they are no cost to the Government. Does not the Government have to provide trains? Do not the men travel on the ordinary railways the same as ordinary passengers? You might say every passenger travelling on the railway is only a question of a book entry. Of course, it is only a book entry, but facilities have to be provided and, as a matter of fact, the Railway Department makes a concession to the Chief Secretary's department upon all the tickets issued. They do not charge the full fare, so that the £32,000 that the Chief Secretary's department had to pay, or something approximate, represents, not the full value that would be charged to ordinary passengers, but something considerably less is charged to unforeseen expenditure. Take from the unforeseen expenditure the £32,000 in connection with the returned soldiers, £100,000 for the influenza epidemic, and £30,000 or £40,000 for relief, and the unforeseen expenditure vote dwindles to a very small amount compared to the £438,000 odd spent by the hon. gentleman's Government. I think it can be conceded that there is nothing in the charges made by hon. members, nothing that the Government need worry about at any rate, because all of them are very easy of refutation. As far as the financial position is concerned, the figures are available to members who have sufficient interest and sufficient energy to look them up, and so far as the Estimates are concerned, Parliament cannot be denied, and will not be denied, an

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opportunity of not only perusing the Estimates, but of examining every item, and the full seventeen days, if necessary, will be allowed for their discussion.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I am one of those who wish to lodge an objection against this appropriation of £2,250,000 without receiving from the Treasurer a full statement as to the position. What he has just said, is quite correct—that we have four months' figures from the Treasury before us at the present moment, but he must know that those figures are merely summarised figures. They do not give the details to which we consider we are entitled, and they do not permit us to engage in the criticism which is highly necessary in considering figures of such vast importance. What is it that occasions us this concern at the present moment? We have to consider that up to the end of the last financial year this Government has enjoyed a revenue of £2,250,000 over that of its predecessors; it has engaged in direct taxation to the extent of £1,865,000 more than its predecessors; it still, in spite of that, shows a deficit of £300,000 on the four years. It has increased its revenue by 24.4 per cent., and its expenditure by 27.8 per cent. That is up to the end of the years for which we have complete figures. Let us study the position disclosed by the figures for the last four months; in the first place, the revenue for the month of October totalled £815,000, still an increase of £161,000 over the same month of last year. Now, take the four months' figures up to the 31st October. We find that the revenue for the four months was £3,199,000, an increase of £248,000, whilst the expenditure for the same period was £3,009,000, an increase of £311,000. So that, although the increase in revenue was £248,000, we still have got an increase in expenditure of £311,000, showing that the drift of expenditure over revenue is still continuing, and that is the matter which is occasioning us great concern on this side of the House. The deputy leader of the Opposition has really put the position quite clearly when he said that the deferring of the financial statement until January next means that the taxpayers of Queensland are being kept in a state of suspense for much longer than is reasonable before they ascertain what method the Treasurer means to adopt to make up the accumulated deficiency which has got to be faced sooner or later. As has been pointed out, the deficiency will certainly not be less than £700,000. We have already shown that we have £1,865,000 additional direct taxation on the backs of the people, and there is another £700,000 to come from somewhere. The commercial community know that this has got to be faced, and they have to be bled to make up the deficiency. It is most unreasonable to keep the business people of Queensland in suspense just at the will of the Treasurer, and on account of his desire to take part in Federal elections, when there are greater issues at stake in Queensland. It is unreasonable and unfair to keep them in a state of suspense rather than tell them exactly what they have to face in the matter of making up this deficiency. The Treasurer has referred to the matter of £100,000 which he claims was the surplus in the second year of the present Government's regime. He has put forward the doctrine that unless there are actual vouchers in the possession of the Treasury on 30th June, that the Government is not entitled,

and is not expected, to take into consideration the expenditure represented thereby.

The PREMIER: It is not the practice.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I do not care whether it is the practice or not; it is a most unsound one. If you call in an auditor to audit the accounts of any business concern having branches throughout Queensland, his one business is to see that the expenditure which is incurred in the year under review shall be properly vouched for, and in this particular instance it means that that expenditure was incurred in the actual year in which the Treasurer claims a surplus, and, therefore, that £100,000 surplus was really a myth.

The PREMIER: As a matter of fact, on the same date revenues were, no doubt, received into the country offices, and not taken into account.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is merely a supposition.

The PREMIER: Every railway station in the State should have received cash.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That shows loose methods. In arriving at the actual position at the end of the year, you should make provision for that.

The PREMIER: The Treasury can only take into account money actually received and vouchers.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You surely are not advocating that that is the proper thing! Look at the loopholes such a system would leave in the hands of the Treasurer. Some heavy expenditure might have been incurred during the year, but the vouchers not actually received in the office. It is quite easy to see that under such a practice such vouchers may be delayed in their transit to the Treasury.

The PREMIER: The expenditure has to be taken into account the next year.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You simply put off the evil day. Your desire in altering the system was to show a surplus during the second year of office.

The PREMIER: It was a return to honest finance.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am pointing out that this is not the true method of arriving at the financial position at the end of the year. It is deeply rooted in our minds that the Government have a desire to keep back from the people of Queensland the proper state of affairs. We are firmly convinced, and nothing the hon. gentleman said to-night has removed that conviction,

that he has some set purpose in [8 p.m.] delaying the Financial Statement, because he knows that if the Financial Statement was before the people of Queensland to-day it would be very unsatisfactory and unsavoury reading for those who have to foot the bill. There is £700,000 additional taxation to be levied. We know that the expenditure, as disclosed by these figures for the four months, is still on the increase. It really means that Queensland is playing a most important part in the coming Federal elections—Ryanitis, if I may call it so, from which Queensland has been suffering for four years, is to be extended to the Federal arena. What we have been suffering from here is to be inoculated into the Commonwealth of Australia. We know that, like opium, the earlier effects of this particular disease are elusive. The Labour Government comes in, and promises this, that, and

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*]

the other, and you have only to read the Federal manifesto to-day to see that the same disease of Ryanitis—promise everything independent of what it costs—is to be introduced into the Federal arena. Like opium, the aftermath is most tragical in its effect, and the result is most disastrous, and that is the disease which Queensland is suffering from at the present time. We have had four years of this Ryanitis—four years of what you may call the first effects of this opium—and now we are beginning to suffer from its effects—the finances of the State are becoming involved, the position is becoming threatening, industries are being held up, and unemployment is rife. The whole position is full of disaster, and because that disaster is going to be disclosed in the Financial Statement which ought to be put before the people of Queensland, the statement is now being delayed until January, and is going to be kept back so that this Ryanitis can be inoculated in the Federal arena without the antidote which is shown in the Financial Statement. The statement has been made by the leaders of the Government that Queensland has never looked better. That is the cry which is being used in the Federal arena to-day—that financial affairs in Queensland were never more prosperous. What do we find? In 1915, there was a surplus in sight of, approximately, £240,000, and a credit balance to the Loan Fund of £2,000,000. The credit was so sound and the position so solid that we were able to refuse and turn down the offer of the Commonwealth to assist us with loan money. Queensland in that day was in a very happy position financially; it was sound and stable, so much so, that it had not to go cap-in-hand and borrow money in any direction.

The PREMIER: You had to do the same as every other Government had—to go cap-in-hand and borrow money from the Jew.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: During the last four and a-half years the accumulated deficits amount to £630,000.

The PREMIER: That is very moderate.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Taxation has increased by 190 per cent., and we are at present looking for loans. In that regard it is interesting to read this little eye-opener as to how we are going to finance the present position. I am reading from the "Australian Insurance and Banking Record" of 21st October, page 832—

"It has been suggested that as a ground for the rumours which have been caught flying, that the Minister for Railways has purchased railway material in America, and is arranging with the Guaranty Trust Company, of New York, for the financing of the purchase. We may be sure that the Government is not going to America for a loan. Such a thing was possible in March last, when our credit in England was said to have been threatened, and inquiries were made as to the prospects of borrowing from Uncle Sam, but at that time the British Government had not released the control of exchange, and a loan was a very different proposition."

That probably accounts for the rumours we have circulating here with regard to American assistance in our financial position. The Treasurer has carefully sidetracked any requests for information which have been made to him to find out what is the exact position, and it is this ignorance in which we

are kept in regard to the financial position that makes us suspicious and doubtful. I put it to the Treasurer: Is it fair or reasonable? We represent on this side quite a large percentage of the voters of Queensland—very much larger than the Treasurer gives us credit for—and we have responsibilities to those electors, and yet we are kept in this state of suspense and doubt regarding the actual position. The hon. gentleman will not tell us what the position is.

The PREMIER: I have been frank.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: So frank that we do not know where we are at the present moment.

The PREMIER: I cannot help it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You can help it. Instead of occupying the time of the House during the past two months by introducing a lot of measures, which are nothing but idle dreams, you could have done something more practical. You could have shown us what the financial position of Queensland is to-day, and what provision you intend making to meet that situation.

The PREMIER: The hon. member has arrived at the conclusion that we shall be short by £700,000. What is his suggestion as to how to meet that shortage?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It has been said on this side that when a malady exists and the doctor is called in, he will then prescribe. I quite admit that I am young politically, but I have been sufficiently long here to know that it is not my place to suggest a remedy to the hon. gentleman at this juncture. Possibly at some later stage the position may be reversed, and the hon. gentleman may want information, which we will probably deal out in the same way as he is dealing it out to us.

The PREMIER: If we are put on that side I will be only too happy to give you a suggestion.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I shall look forward to the opportunity, and, perhaps, it is not so far off as the hon. gentleman thinks. I cannot find anything more apt to describe the situation than the old adage of "Eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow we die." That seems to be the position in a nutshell. We are going on spending, offering bribes, and promising things—we are going on independent altogether of the ultimate issue, entirely neglectful and unmindful of the consequences which always follow lavish expenditure such as is going on at the present time, and entirely unmindful of the lessons which past history has taught us. I have before me this little interesting leaflet, which the present leader and deputy leader of the Government subscribed to some years ago. At a later date possibly we will give the sequel to this wonderful treatise on finance. If these hon. gentlemen have any sense of humour in them at all, I can assure them they will have a very hearty laugh when we are able to put before them the sequel to this excellent criticism from their point of view. I am going to deal with one little passage. Here they ask, in astonished surprise, and put before the electors—

"Would you be surprised to know—"

You can imagine them on platforms talking to an audience wrapped in wonder and attention, and thumping the air, and shouting in a way which is generally associated with hon. members opposite—

"Would you be surprised to know that

Mr. Elphinstone.]

the deficit of the Liberal Governments since Queensland was made a separate colony—that is, from 1859 to 1914—have amounted to £4,219,708—

The deficits in fifty-five years—

“and that the much-talked-of surpluses have only amounted to £2,600,845. Of the surpluses, the Morgan-Labour Government was responsible for one-half.”

Now they put this in large type—

“This amounts to a total deficit of £1,618,865.”

They do not point out that that was in fifty-five years. This much maligned Government took fifty-five years to accumulate a deficit of £1,618,000. Here is the sequel. In four years, £835,000 is the deficit of hon. gentlemen opposite, these doctors of finance, these men who in reality know nothing about it, who know the way to promise things to get votes and mislead people, and simply say, “We will give you anything as long as you vote for us.” When the natural sequel follows, and the aftermath comes about, we are denied the Financial Statement; we are denied the opportunity of showing the people of Queensland what the result of all these ridiculous promises means. The astonishing part to me is that gentlemen of experience such as those who occupy the front Treasury benches, are induced to perpetuate this system of promising everything. No doubt, in spite of their experience in Queensland during the past four years, they will go on to the platform and will support this Federal Labour manifesto throughout Australia; yet they know positively that that disaster which is threatening Queensland at the present moment will, as surely as night follows day, be the same in the Commonwealth when once these irresponsible gentlemen get hold of the reins of Government. They can control everything except money. But as I have said before, when it comes to a question of finance they are absolutely at sea. What an excellent position we would all be in if we had a bank manager who at all times would honour our overdrafts—buy what we like, irrespective of the cost, irrespective of where we get it, but buy, buy, buy. If you have got an accommodating bank manager who would allow you unlimited overdraft, well and good. But we all know what that means. That is the position with these gentlemen to-day, and the position they want to place the Commonwealth in, offering everything and anything so that the poor long-suffering taxpayers can bleed white to bolster up everything red. Anyone who reads the manifesto must be impressed with that one thing—the disaster which threatens Queensland to-morrow if the Hughes Government is turned out.

Mr. SWAYNE: The Treasurer, in trying to make the best of a bad case, excused himself for not giving us the Financial Statement before the end of the year. I should like, first of all, to point out the dates during the last eight years when the Financial Statements have been submitted to the House. I find that the Statement was submitted in August, 1918, 26th September, 1917, 1st November, 1916, 13th October, 1915, 13th October, 1914, 26th October, 1913, 19th September, 1912, 29th August, 1911, and 17th August, 1910.

The PREMIER: Go back two years more, and you will find it in December.

[Mr. Elphinstone.

Mr. SWAYNE: But that is not January. As the Premier has reminded me of that, I would point out that the two years he refers to are neither of them as bad as he says. They were peculiar cases. One was a very late session, starting in November. There were circumstances arising that year that do not prevail this year. But, however, in any case, it is only December, and not the end of January, so he cannot make much out of that. The Treasurer excused himself by saying that for two months or so we get the balances in the various departments of revenue and expenditure published in the paper, and that that was quite sufficient. But that is not the point. What we want, and what would be most interesting to the electors, is to have an opportunity of discussing the administration of the departments before Mr. Ryan goes to the country on 13th December next.

Mr. GLEDSON: Now the cat is out of the bag.

Mr. SWAYNE: That is what hon. members opposite do not want. How is it that, while this is supposed to be a strong Northern Cabinet, the North is in the state it is at the present time. The Government are to blame because of their maladministration of the industrial laws. We would like to know how it is that the Premier's electorate has fallen off so much in population that it is not justified in returning a member of Parliament.

Mr. GLEDSON: Ask the Chillagoe Company.

Mr. SWAYNE: These are things that we want to know. We want to know why the Government are keeping the Estimates back until after the Federal election. The Financial year ended on the 30th June last, and it will not be until January next, seven or eight months after the close of the financial year, that we will get a full statement of the receipts and expenditure and a report upon the Government's management of their business during the year ended 30th June last. The people will want to know why the Estimates have been delayed. The only conclusion they can come to will be that the position is so absolutely rotten that the Government would sooner risk a considerable amount of odium and adverse criticism by postponing the Estimates rather than introduce them before the election and prejudice Mr. Ryan's chances thereby. The position is so absolutely bad that they see they will lose more by disclosing the true position to the people of Queensland than they will by acting in the scandalous way they are. In view of the assertions which will be made throughout Australia in the next few weeks, it would be interesting to remind the electors of Australia of some of the promises made by Mr. Ryan and his party when they first came into office. I will quote from this little dodger.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman will not be in order in discussing grievances generally at this stage.

Mr. SWAYNE: I might point out that other speakers have been allowed a fairly large range.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! This is not the time to discuss grievances. This is a proposal to pass a sum of money, and the hon. gentleman must confine his remarks to that question.

Mr. SWAYNE: I am opposed to this money being voted unless we get more information than we have got now. The hon. member for Oxley just now was dealing with the deficits of different Governments, but he rather understated the case, because it is shown in this red dodger—

“It points out if a man borrows £5, pays back £7 to the money-lender and interest, and still owes £8 for the original £5 borrowed, he is a fool. Every man and woman will admit so much.”

That is exactly the position which the authors of this dodger have placed the people of Queensland in to-day. They make fools of them. I hope the people of Australia will take the lesson to heart and see the way the Queensland people have been fooled in the past.

Mr. ROBERTS: Who is the author of that?

Mr. SWAYNE: It is signed by “W. McCosker, 236 Elizabeth street, for the ‘Worker’ Newspaper Proprietary, Brisbane.”

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the heading?

Mr. SWAYNE: The heading is, “How your money goes.” (Laughter.) That is most appropriate after five years of rule by this Government. The hon. member for Oxley stated that on the Government’s showing for over fifty-five years there was a total deficit in Queensland of £1,618,865, but that is not a circumstance to what these gentlemen are capable of. In three years they piled up a deficit of over £800,000, and according to the Auditor-General another £100,000 should be added on top of that. That is nearly £1,000,000 in three years. The Auditor-General, in his report for 1916, referred to the alleged surplus of the Government. He stated that as a result of the action of the Treasury Department in not following the practice of previous years with regard to the payment of accounts, and with regard to various items charged to Consolidated Revenue Fund, they disclosed a surplus when there should really have been a deficit of approximately £100,000.

The PREMIER: We did not follow the practice of past years.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think I am quite justified in saying that the hon. member for Oxley underestimated the deficit. We all know that the Government took the expenditure for eleven months instead of for twelve months, and they also charged wooden school buildings to Loan Fund Account instead of to revenue, where they are generally charged, as they have not a very long life. When we realise that the Government of Queensland accumulated a debit of £1,000,000 in three years, it is something for the electors of Australia to bear in mind when Mr. Ryan is asking for their suffrages in the next few weeks. Speaking as a Northern member, I would like to draw attention to the position there. I have an extract from the paper here dated 1st November.

Mr. COLLINS: What paper?

Mr. SWAYNE: The “Courier.” It is a statement of fact. I do not think anyone can contradict it—

“GULF MAIL SERVICE.

“A.U.S.N. CO. WILL NOT RENEW CONTRACTS.

“By January next the contract between the A.U.S.N. Co., Ltd. (for which Messrs.

Macdonald, Hamilton, and Co., Ltd. are the managing agents) and the Postmaster-General’s Department, for the carriage of mails to the Gulf ports, including Normanton and Burketown, will terminate. Tenders have already been called for a renewal of the service upon its termination by the A.U.S.N. Co., but so far as that company is concerned, its name will not figure among the tenderers.”

We can realise the danger of an empty North to the rest of Australia. We know it is a danger spot, through which there may be an influx of other races there at any time.

Mr. COLLINS: They have been reading your speeches.

Mr. SWAYNE: It will put an end to our white Australia. I am in this position: that I am the only Northern member in this House who is not tied down, and I can speak on this subject.

Mr. COLLINS: The only black spot in the North.

Mr. SWAYNE: We are asked to vote over £2,000,000 for the Government. We have had five years of their administration of this State, and a paragraph like that which I have just read brings home to us the necessity for a full discussion of the various departments, which we can only get after the presentation of the Financial Statement and Estimates. There are many things I would like to refer to. One of the things that has been wanted most in the North during the past three years is food. The people there have been starving. Regarding agriculture generally, we have large areas of virgin soil untouched by the plough, and yet the acreage under cultivation is falling off.

Mr. HARTLEY: On account of the high cost of implements.

Mr. SWAYNE: The late leader of the Government had the opportunity of dealing with these matters, and he should have done so before seeking the suffrages of the people of Australia. I have already pointed out that the steamers ceased to run during the shipping strike in 1917 and 1919. The Government gave every encouragement to the men to strike and hampered the Southern authorities in that matter. The people in the North were starving at the time. We know that the sugar crop is being blocked in its harvesting at present by continued strikes. I heard the hon. member for Bowen interject. There is a mill in his district which is a shocking example to other places.

Mr. COLLINS: Don’t forget that during the shipping dispute all the fruit was got away from Bowen, while private enterprise held up 1,000 cases.

Mr. SWAYNE: I can understand the hon. member’s excitement and anger. He is not game to speak on this question.

Mr. COLLINS: I am game to speak to the electors, and I am game to go into your electorate.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I would like to point out the action of the administration of the department that controls the industrial legislation shows that it is biased. Only one side is prosecuted, while the other side is allowed to go scot free. Those who are conversant with the Industrial Peace Act will remember how well it worked.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. Swayne.]

Mr. SWAYNE: I take it that some of the money we are asked to vote will be applied towards defraying the expenses of the Works Department and Justice Department, between whom the Act I am speaking of is administered. I contend that that Act is not administered as it should be. The non-application of the Act is largely bringing about the state of things that prevails in the North and makes people sick of living in the North. You cannot pick up a newspaper without reading about people selling their furniture and leaving the North. That is owing to the administration of the present Government.

Mr. COLLINS: My electorate increased by over 2,000 votes since I represented it. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. SWAYNE: They will find you out. Look at the administration of the Railway Department up North. The railways are being used by one section to hamper the other section. If a farmer is in trouble with his cancutters he is refused carriage on the railway which is a Government utility. He is refused carriage for his produce over the State railways.

Mr. COLLINS: That is a lie.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, it is not.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: I do not take any notice of that sort of thing. It is worthy of the man using it. All he can do is to abuse.

Mr. COLLINS: You are the biggest muck-raker in the House.

Mr. SWAYNE: The position in the North is largely owing to the inflammatory and abusive speeches of hon. members like the hon. member who interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must not use unparliamentary language.

Mr. SWAYNE: I think he brought it on himself. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Will the hon. gentleman connect his remarks with the question before the Committee?

Mr. SWAYNE: This industrial trouble is arising all over the North. I have here a comment made by Dr. Brienl, a Government official, who is superintendent of the Tropical Diseases Institute at Townsville. He points out that so far as the climate of Queensland is concerned, there is nothing wrong with it. It is all right. Dr. Brienl expressed the opinion that there was nothing in the climatic conditions to prevent a large influx of population. All that was wanted was men to work and live there. There is a paragraph in the "Courier" of 13th September, 1919, referring to the remarks made by Dr. Brienl, in which he says—

"He was not at all hopeful that anything of the kind would take place, because it seemed impossible to rely upon getting the labour necessary for carrying on industries of the country."

He was referring to the falling off of enterprise in the North. I might point out, in regard to matters under control of the Chief Secretary's Department—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I draw the attention of the hon. gentleman to the fact that the Committee are asked to grant a sum of money for the [8.30 p.m.] services of the year 1919-1920.

While that allows a fairly wide discussion, I cannot allow him to continue in the way he is doing.

[Mr. Swayne.

Mr. SWAYNE: Yes, Mr. Chairman; but it seems to me that I am justifying my opposition to this vote going through as it is. Surely I am justified in discussing the conduct and management of the State hotel at Babinda, and pointing out that during the recent shortage of food up there, when sugar and flour was scarce, there was plenty of beer—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: It seems to me a very legitimate grievance, and what brought me to it was the opinion of an important authority upon the drink question in relation to Northern development in regard to the establishing of an hotel in what was previously a prohibited area, and thus increasing the evil there, and which that authority looked upon as likely to prejudice settlement. The policy of this Administration—no matter what protestations are made—all through is the discouragement of settlement in the producing districts, and seeing that things have come to the pitch that they have to-day, it is wrong that this Financial Statement is held over to a later date, I suppose, than it has ever been before. Nothing like it has happened for the past ten years—I think I would be safe in saying for the last twenty years. The only conclusion that can be come to is that for some reason which reflects very much upon the authors of it, the Statement has been wilfully kept out for a longer period than has been known for perhaps twenty years. Before the vote goes through, we should have some better reason and more information than has been given to us.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like to say a few words especially on the question of increased taxation, and also on the methods of the Government in getting money. We have only to point to the proclamation under which they seized the meat. Here is one part of it—

"Each proclamation has a preamble setting out that the action is taken by reason of the continued existence of the present war."

Now, will any man say that the war is in existence to-day, and when Mr. Lloyd George said that even the British Navy has been sent to the four winds of the earth, as it were, to get rid of it. We have no ships—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am commenting on the methods of the Government getting supplies. I said they have no right whatever to say that the great war is still in existence.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: One reason—and the only one—that they cannot give the Financial Statement and place their views before the people is that they know it would scare the people away from their side at the polling-booth. I understand that the late Premier went almost on his knees and begged of them not to issue the Financial Statement before the elections. (Government laughter.) That is common property outside. What about your Caucus meeting? Did not Mr. Ryan beg that of you weeks ago? (Government laughter and interjections.)

The CHAIRMAN: I ask hon. members on my right to allow the hon. member for Drayton to proceed without interruption, and I ask the hon. member for Drayton to confine his remarks to the question before the Committee.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am confining my remarks, Mr. Chairman, in this way: that had it not been for the circumstances I have mentioned we would have had the Financial Statement laid on the table. Seeing that the taxation has increased something like 190 per cent., it is most unfortunate that the security for future taxation has decreased at least 30 per cent. There are thousands of men to-day who were in a very independent position when this Government came into power, they had their life's savings in land which was negotiable. Almost at any time they liked to offer a farm for sale, they could get their money in reasonable time; but offer it now and see where you are.

The HOME SECRETARY: How do you arrive at that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will tell you. Previous to this party coming into power, it was the principle of the Government to keep land used for food-producing purposes as free as possible from taxation. But what do we find now? In the first place there is the land tax, then the extra income tax. You are taxed again on the cow you get the milk from. That is taxed again under the income tax. I object to the Government getting this money on account of the way they have used money previously, and I say they are going to use it for this very purpose again. You have to pay increased income tax, and lest they should miss something, they compel the dairy factories to put a stamp on their cheque at the very last moment. There is nothing else they can do regarding the farmer but bury him, and the only one left then is the undertaker who would have to bury him, and I suppose they would charge the undertaker something.

The Government's method of getting money has resulted in the impoverishment of thousands. We have a kind of prosperity, but it is prosperity by living on taxation—like a dog getting fat by eating its own tail. (Laughter.) Soon there will be no tail, and no dog. (Renewed laughter.) What is going to be done then? Very soon there will be no wealth to tax—there will be no farmers—the people will all be in the cities, and where is the prosperity going to come from? If you carry on with the same men who are in power to-day, and the same reckless expenditure continues, there is going to be a terrible catastrophe. You cannot live for ever on taxation, and you are going to drive the producers out of the State. One thing I am certain of is that if we had only to tax the production of hon. members, there would be very little revenue, and we would have to turn our attention to someone else.

The Minister for Railways knows well that they are using the money paid for the soldiers to inflate the railway revenue. I believe the Treasurer admitted, the other day, that he paid cash—did you pay cash or merely transfer it to Revenue Account?

Well, you see it would be a very easy thing to borrow that cash and pay it to the Railway Department to inflate the revenue, and I think I am in a position to say that that is practically what is being done.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do I understand you to object to the soldiers getting the money?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do not; but the Minister is very quiet on that subject. Then you come to the £30,000 a month. As the Treasurer said, it is a nice little thing to handle. I certainly object to money being used in the commandeering of meat, as is

being done. Actions like that rob the State of producers and—I was going to say the credit of the Government—but it never had any. There is such a thing as business honour and business credit, but we know, so far as their dealings with producers are concerned, they never had any business honour or business credit.

GOVERNMENT interruption.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Didn't you start your first butcher's shop on stolen sheep? (Government laughter and disorder.) Didn't you take those sheep by force, and never paid for a single one until they were all sold? Can you call that honourable business? Suppose another man did the same thing; he would find himself in gaol. I certainly object to the Government getting any more money to carry on business in such a dishonourable way, and I certainly hope that we will have no more of it. Our credit goes beyond our own boundary. We have not only to consider what our own people think of us, but what the people in other parts of the world think. People in the other parts of the world will say, "Well, the Queensland Government stole 6,000 sheep and started a butcher's shop, and they did not pay for a single one until they sold them all."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I certainly object to the Government receiving any more money for such a purpose.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): It is very unwise of this Committee to blindly vote a sum of money equalling £2,250,000 to the Government without first getting the Financial Statement, especially in view of the fact that the Government have had a succession of deficits, and the people are of the opinion that the deficit this year will exceed that of other years by an enormous amount.

Mr. FOLEY: What people?

Mr. FRY: The people of Queensland. The people of Queensland are looking for a Financial Statement. Everywhere you go, whether it is in Queen street or in the country, the people want to know what is the position of the finances, and it appears that the Financial Statement is being kept back for one purpose, and one purpose only, and that is to keep the people in ignorance of the true position until after the Federal election. There are rumours going about this State which should be allayed.

Mr. COLLINS: Who started the rumour?

Mr. FRY: I do not care who started it, it is there. There are rumours going about that after the Federal elections take place there is going to be retrenchment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I heard a rumour that the Opposition were going into permanent recess.

Mr. FRY: If the Opposition were here in proportion to the votes that were cast for them this House would be much better, because individuals would be prepared to conduct the country's business in a proper way. At the present time we have a machine and it must handle the finances just as it is instructed. I would like to know if Mr. Ryan, the ex-Premier, has the same staff of men with him now that he had while he was Premier, and if he has got the same staff, who is paying them? Are the salaries of those men to be paid out of this sum of money?

Mr. COLLINS: Who is asking?

Mr. Fry.]

Mr. FRY: I am asking here at the right time. I am concerned about the finances of the State, as my electors are contributing portion of the £2,250,000, and I ask again, is Mr. Ryan's staff being paid out of this sum of money? If it is, then the money is being spent contrary to the wishes of the people. That is a straightforward question, but, apparently, hon. members do not like it. It gives me some suspicion that there is some truth in this rumour. It has come to my ears that a sum of £200 was subscribed from a fund for the purpose of organising opposition to Mr. Hughes. These rumours are accentuated by the fact that the Government are remaining quiet on their Financial Statement.

Mr. RIORDAN: Do you believe that?

Mr. FRY: As to whether I believe it or not does not matter. The people believe it, and they have a right to know how the money is being spent. I would like to know if this money is being used to advertise news in connection with the Federal election. We know that in past years certain moneys have been paid to a member of another House for writing articles and signing them "A Returned Soldier." They were inserted in a newspaper called "The Soldier," and were inserted at advertising rates. I want to know if any of this money is being used to publish, at advertising rates, articles written by the same soldier in the Upper House.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I heard you wrote an article and signed it "A Mother of Ten." (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: If the Minister for Railways was the father of ten he would be better off. (Renewed laughter.) I want to know if portion of this money has been set aside for the employment of returned soldiers. At the present time you see returned soldiers in every street going about looking for work. That is a serious state of affairs, and whilst there are golden opportunities to bring about a state of industrial rest and progress we see these men going about the streets looking for work. If a portion of the money is set apart for that purpose it is all right, but I want to know something about it. Why should we not know something about it?

Mr. STOPFORD: Why give soldiers like that war bonds instead of cash?

Mr. FRY: Listen to that. What is the use of giving work to returned soldiers.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: He did not say that.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. STOPFORD: I rise to a point of order. I made no such statement. My remark was distinctly, "What was the good of giving soldiers like that war bonds, instead of cash?"

Mr. FRY: I distinctly heard the hon. member say—

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw, withdraw!

Mr. FRY: The remarks I fancied I heard. (Government laughter.) I am honest enough to give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt.

Mr. STOPFORD: There is no doubt about it.

Mr. FRY: The question is the employment of these returned men, and how are you going to connect the question of war bonds with men who are looking for work. I want the Government to get going and not talk about it. We hear a lot of talk about what we are doing for the soldiers, but I want the Government to get a move on.

[Mr. Fry.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are you in favour of war bonds or cash?

Mr. FRY: I will answer you at the right time. I am of opinion that there is a good deal of favouritism shown to men outside according to the side they take in politics. There is a large number of men who do not ally themselves with any party. Then there is a number of men who are closely allied to the Government, and, on the other hand, there is a large proportion who are supporting the Opposition. There is a fear of victimisation or favouritism, and that speech of the Premier at South Brisbane last Monday night, wherein he referred to the soldiers who hauled Mr. Hughes through Brisbane streets on a wagon as "Brummagem diggers," has gone towards convincing the men that there is going to be favouritism; and, furthermore, that this money is going to be used for political propaganda. The last Financial Statement showed that a certain amount was set apart for the Returned Soldiers' Labour League. What is going to be the position in the future? We are told that the men who hauled the wagon for the Prime Minister are to be victimised.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the resolution.

Mr. FRY: If any of this money is to be expended on party politics I want to know how much is going towards the Returned Soldiers' Labour League. I want to know that, because the speech made by the Premier has been taken as a direction to those men that they are going to be victimised if they do not vote for the Government. Amongst the returned soldiers who were drawing the wagon upon which Mr. Hughes, the Prime Minister, rode on his recent visit to Brisbane were seventeen soldiers who had been decorated for distinguished service. There were six returned soldiers who had lost limbs, and there were eighty-one men who had been seriously wounded, and fourteen original Anzacs.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot connect those remarks with this vote.

Mr. FRY: I am endeavouring to show that the Premier who should be looked up to as the first politician in the land—

The PREMIER: The first politician?

Mr. FRY: I will call you a statesman, if you like. The Premier has given to the world a phrase which will be used throughout the public service to designate men whom they want to be victimised. This

[9 p.m.] money is to be used for that purpose. There were thousands

of other returned men of all ranks in that procession. Many of them were decorated, and the Premier made a very unwise statement about these men, who had been close to death, and who had been for months in a critical condition. I have brought this matter up as I think it is a right thing to do.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. FRY: I will not proceed with that matter any more, because I see that it is distasteful. At the present time, when the cost of living is so high and people want to know how they stand financially, we have not got a Financial Statement. We are sent here by the people to do the best we can in their interests. The Government have

three times this session asked for Supply, and yet they have not presented a Financial Statement. Is that a right position for the House to be placed in? We have given the Premier credit for doing a fair thing, but if he is bound up by the party behind him, which is holding the Financial Statement back, he is an unfortunate individual, because he must know that the people are crying out for a Financial Statement. (Government laughter.) The Government want to hide the financial position until after the Federal elections. My contention is that there is something to hide, that the position is not savoury, and that the deficit is greater than it was before.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): In my opinion there is no justification whatever for this motion.

The PREMIER: If you oppose this we will not be able to pay the public servants. (Opposition laughter.)

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That old gag is thread-bare.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The public servants will be paid, but it is the duty of the Premier to justify his action. This evening, after all the criticism, the only justification given by the Premier was in proving, to some extent, to the satisfaction of the House that nearly £2,000,000 of loan money is available, or that arrangements have been made to get it. But what about the general position of things—of the finances of the country? We have no right to move from this House, and if we were strong enough we would not do so, until we were fully conversant with the intentions of the Government in financing the country. No explanation whatever has been forthcoming from the Treasurer as to the miscarriage of his Estimates of twelve months ago. He then anticipated a surplus of some £7,382. He was very careful at that time to make provision, through the sources of increased taxation, for further amounts of £214,120. As a matter of fact, he received, according to the Auditor-General, some £313,507, and although he had earmarked these amounts which were coming from the sources of taxation, in order to meet the deficiencies of the previous year, we understand that not one penny has gone in that direction. Although the Premier took exception, only a few weeks ago, to some of the criticisms which were made, and which indicated the impossibility of doing otherwise than he had done with the revenue he had received, we know he was perfectly correct; he, however, outlined the course. The Auditor-General pointed out how the Treasurer himself at the time had outlined how he intended overtaking the deficiencies of the past. The Auditor-General now says that the amount of £313,507 16s. 10d. was actually received from this source, and made up as follows:—

“The amount of £313,507 16s. 10d., which was actually received from this source, and made up as follows:—
Income tax, £193,564 7s. 8d., land tax, £119,943 9s. 2d.; total, £313,507 16s. 10d. was not applied towards the reduction of the previous year's deficit, but merged into the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the past year (1918-19). Had these collections been applied in the manner indicated by the Treasurer, the deficit on last year's transactions would have amounted to £485,495 19s. 10d.”

The PREMIER: How do you suggest that we could have dealt with that differently to what we did?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I do not think you could have dealt with it differently.

The PREMIER: Then, why complain?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It was the Treasurer who indicated at the time that certain amounts coming from the sources I have named were to be specially set aside. Of course, he anticipated a surplus of £7,000, and had he received that surplus, he would have been able to apportion the amounts in the way he indicated. However, he was not able to do that, because he did not receive the money. He did receive the £313,507, and he also received an additional £296,000, but not one penny was applied to wiping off the amount of the deficit in the previous year.

The PREMIER: There was a lot of extra expenditure.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: There is no explanation given as to why all this extra expense was incurred. It is on account of the Treasurer's inability to finance the affairs of the country that we have, during the last four months, gone to the bad to a still greater extent, and it is essential that this vote should not pass without the severest criticism, and the strongest opposition from this side of the House. The revenue for the four months of the present year shows an increase of £248,735 on the corresponding period of last year, and the expenditure an increase of £311,911, so that during the four months the Treasurer has gone to the bad to the extent of another £63,175. It is matters of that kind which make it essential that we should have a further statement from the Treasurer. For my own part I am puzzled to understand why the Treasurer attempts to finance as he is doing, when he had means at his disposal this year—at any rate, there need not have been any great deficiency. Why is the House not entitled to some explanation as to why the Treasurer desires to show deficiencies instead of surpluses? This is made apparent to us by the amounts which have been charged in connection with State enterprise to revenue account, and which should have been charged to State enterprise account. No attempt has been made by the Treasurer to explain matters of that kind. Indeed, if we go through the various items referred to by the Auditor-General, we shall at once see that if ordinary methods had been followed in connection with the finances with regard to State enterprises and other things, and of debiting items to their right account, there would have been no deficiency. Now, payment of members is responsible for some £13,000, the Royal Commission on iron and steel works for £2,831 relief account, which has been particularly drawn attention to by the Auditor-General, some £26,000. There was no need for that amount to have been £26,000 if the affairs of the country had been rightly administered. You may, therefore, take half of that amount as being altogether unnecessary in the year. The Warra Coalmine is responsible for £47,453, and the strictures which were passed by the Auditor-General on that undertaking are well known to everyone. This amount should have been charged to State enterprises. In the light of the decision arrived at by the Commissioner for State Enterprises, what is the explanation for amounts such as that made in connection

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with the Warra State Coalmine? The State trawler is down for £10,666, charged to revenue, another amount in connection with fish enterprise, £2,090; Bowen Coalmine £3,053, Baralaba £2,708, Styx River £1,925, Pulverised Lime Account £836. All these amounts make a total of some £37,662.

The PREMIER: You are only showing that our real deficit is not so great as you say.

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

Mr. FOLEY, one of the Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The House and the country has a right to know why you desire to come down with a deficit and show it to be greater than it is. What can the reason be, unless it is to justify the Government in bringing in extra taxation. These amounts named by me should have gone to the debit of an account which was already heavily in credit. In connection with State enterprises, I find that he uses these words—

“The question is as to whether the expenditure in connection with State enterprises should be treated as separate businesses, but in view of the arrangement made with the Treasurer, I have decided to treat the enterprises as separate branches of one business of a State enterprise.”

What we want to know is that when a debit is made, how is it that the debit is not charged to enterprises generally? There is only one thought that can come to anyone's mind. The idea is to boost up the enterprise business, and this is done more plausibly by not charging the enterprises which are in debit. The late Premier of Queensland, when he is haranguing the crowds in the South and elsewhere, will indicate that the State enterprises of Queensland have returned £262,000, whereas, as a matter of fact, that amount would be enormously decreased if the enterprises which had failed to produce a profit were charged to that account according to the determination which has been arrived at by the Commissioner. The thing is not fair and it is not sound. It is unjust. The next business will be to come down with extra taxation to provide for deficiencies. I will say, in connection with the balancing of accounts that the Treasurer had no desire to balance. Evidently he had no desire to balance, because there was another £37,000 in connection with the stock embargo which might be transferred to revenue.

The PREMIER: Do you say that we could do that?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Yes, you had that money in hand, and instead of coming down and making it essential to levy taxation you could have gone a long way towards balancing your account.

The PREMIER: You would raid any funds. You would raid the Sinking Fund and add it to the consolidated revenue.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: I blame the hon. gentleman for not balancing his accounts. It must be a puzzle to any man who has to do with financial matters to understand why the Treasurer has come down with such a Statement as he has done. The Auditor-General condemns the hon. gentleman for not doing certain things. I named certain things which were charged to revenue which should not have been.

The PREMIER: You would raid the Trust Funds in order to pay into revenue. The stock embargo was a Trust Fund.

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: No, I would not; but you decided to run all the State enterprises as one, and where a State enterprise shows a loss it is not right to charge the loss to revenue. I want to speak especially regarding railway matters. On more than one occasion Ministers have referred to the railways, and yesterday the Assistant Minister for Justice made a remark in connection with the railways saying that railways the world over were not paying. I want to know how our railways compare with our neighbours in New South Wales and Victoria? They have existed and lived under conditions very similar to those in Queensland, and yet they have managed their affairs. The following figures show the state of affairs in New South Wales, Victoria, and Queensland, so far as the railways are concerned, for the last financial year:—

	Queensland	Victoria.	New South Wales.
Revenue	£3,984,597	£3,476,075	£9,058,173
Working Expenses	£3,030,445	£1,639,787	£6,904,450
Net Revenue	£ 91,296	£2,167,413	£3,053,723
Percentage of Working Expenses	92	62.35	69.33
Earnings per Train Mile.	8s. 0 1/2.	9s. 10 1/2.	9s. 11 1/2.
Working Expenses per Train Mile	7s. 5 1/2.	6s. 1 1/2.	6s. 11 1/2.
Net Earnings per Train Mile	3s. 5 1/2.	3s. 3 1/2.	3s. 0 1/2.
Net Earnings per Train Mile	0s. 7 1/2.	3s. 3 1/2.	£4 0s. 7 1/2.
Percentage of Profit	11s. 6 3/4.	£3 3s. 0d.	£163,360
Deficit	£1,418,473	£163,366	...
Number of Employees	19,495	19,026	34,589
Miles Open	5,612	4,611	4,524
Train Miles Run	9,942,744	13,031,655	19,935,202

There is something wrong when that kind of thing is going on.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It is scandalous.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It is scandalous. It is the most shocking state of things that has ever existed in any State in Australia. The accumulated deficit in four years of the Ryan Government on the Queensland railways amounted to £3,694,968. The earning capacity of each employee in the Railway Department, when this Government took office, was £102 11s. 11d., and it is now £17 3s. 9d. What is wrong? If ever there was evidence of shocking mismanagement it is in connection with the railways of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) That is the position. Four or five years ago the railways were practically paying their way, and now we find ourselves in the position that the only income towards paying interest on the railways was the sum of £296,000. If hon. members who have charge of a department like that felt the seriousness of the position and the obligations they owe to the State of Queensland they would not remain in office one hour, but would give someone else the opportunity of making ends meet.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you suggest an improvement should be made?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Do not put men on where there is no work for them to do. That is where you are spending money. You are putting men in positions where there is no work for them. That is taking men from the inland towns because men are anxious to get into the Railway Department seeing the open arms that are held out to them, and appointments freely made. Men have left the country towns to take up positions in the Government. It has reacted in this direction that there has been a loss of production, and a loss of work for the railways. That kind of thing cannot go on. We have been trying to get some information regarding the number of public servants in the different departments in order to find out how far you have gone, and see if the position in other departments is the same as the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What causes diminished production?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: It has been caused by men leaving the land, and in many cases not only were they lured to leave the land as I have indicated, on account of inducements from the Government, but because of increased taxation, which resulted in losses to them.

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

Mr. BAYLEY (*Pittsworth*): Many of the actions of this Government, and a great deal of their legislation since they took over the reins of Government have been most extraordinary and astounding, and this particular action of the Government is no exception to the rule. It is small wonder, indeed, that members on this side of the House rise in their places and strenuously and persistently object to the procedure which the Government is adopting in this particular. If we had good reasons for believing that the Government would put this £2,000,000 to good use; perhaps we would not have so much cause to voice the sentiments we have done to-night, but we know from past experience that the great bulk of the money which is voted from time to time has not been judiciously expended. If a Liberal administration had been in power during the last few years, and they did what the present Government are proposing to do now, what a howl would have gone up from the Labour ranks. They would have expressed righteous indignation, but we find hon. members opposite do these things themselves. If we look back over the term of years during which the present administration have been in power we find that we have gone back to a tremendous and most regrettable extent. We are told that this is due to the war and drought. The fact remains that the Southern States are doing better than we are. The Victorian budget, which has been issued, shows that the surplus for the past year amounts to nearly £400,000.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: They had good seasons.

Mr. BAYLEY: So far as taxation is concerned the people of Victoria pay little more than one-third of the total amount of land tax and income tax paid by the average citizen of Queensland. Turning to the land tax we find the same thing obtaining. In Queensland last year the Government raised £164,000 more in the form of land taxation than was charged to the whole of the freeholders of New South Wales,

Victoria, and Tasmania combined. So far as land and income tax are concerned, we find the people of Queensland pay nearly three times the amount that is paid in New South Wales or Victoria. Is it any wonder then that the people of Queensland [9.30 p.m.] want to know what the Government intend doing with this £2,250,000 which they propose to appropriate to-night? Is it any wonder that members on this side get up one after the other and demand some satisfactory explanation? Do they intend to use it in extending the industries of the State?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: No hope.

Mr. BAYLEY: "No hope," the hon. gentleman says, and I believe him. Do they intend to use portion of it to alleviate the distress which is so acute at the present time in the country districts? Only a short time ago a deputation of members of this House, representing the farming constituencies, waited upon the Minister for Agriculture, urging that steps be taken to provide seed wheat for the farmers during the coming year, and I have good reason to believe that their request has been turned down.

Mr. GRAYSON: Oh, no! It is not turned down.

Mr. COLLINS: Speak the truth. Your own side contradicts you.

Mr. BAYLEY: I hope the hon. member is right, and that I have been incorrectly informed. But there is one matter on which, unfortunately, I can speak with a great degree of certainty. Quite recently a deputation waited on the Minister for Railways, and pointed out to him that the stockowners in the country districts were under a great disability regarding feeding their stock, and urged the Minister to take early steps to reduce the freight on forage for starving stock. A reply was received that the Government was prepared to allow a reduction of 33 per cent. to be returned within three years. We know that a large number of stock have died; and, if the drought continues, many thousands of stock will die, and the loss to Queensland, as well as to the stockowners themselves, will unfortunately be very considerable. The least this Government can do is to give those people all the assistance in their power. In New South Wales quite recently, steps have been taken which the Queensland Government would do well to follow. I have a copy of the "Farmer and Settler" of 20th October of this year, which states—

"HELP FOR FARMERS.

"MINIMISING THE EFFECT OF THE DROUGHT.

"The New South Wales Department of Agriculture is formulating a comprehensive scheme for the assistance of farmers affected by the drought.

"Provision is to be made, at whatever cost, to tide necessitous farmers over their period of adversity, so that they may remain on the land and increase the general productivity of the State next year.

"It is proposed to establish representative local boards in each shire to ascertain the actual needs of the farmers, and to distribute such aid as is considered necessary to save the agricultural industry of the State."

Compare that with what has been done for the farmers and producers in Queensland, and we will see what a small part this Government is doing of what they should do.

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With regard to giving outside relief to the people in the cities and towns, and to the men who broke the laws by going on strike contrary to the provision of the Act, the Government paid those strikers for the whole time they were out, gave them back their positions when the strike was over, and made a definite promise that they would not in any way be penalised. Thousands of pounds of the country's money have been expended on these lines. Thousands of pounds also have recently been paid away by the Government in the form of relief to the people of Brisbane and other towns, and this money has not to be returned. In spite of these facts, we find that in a time of dire distress and necessity, when the representatives of the farmers approach the Government and urge consideration and relief in a direction which would save the State tremendous losses, and save a large number of producers from ruin, we get no assistance. For this reason, as well as many others, I have risen to object to the Appropriation Bill being passed at the present time.

Mr. GUNN: I think it is unprecedented in the history of the Parliament of Queensland that twelve months should elapse and no Financial Statement is placed before the House. The Minister said that in 1908-9 the Financial Statement was not tabled until late in the session, but at that time, owing to by-elections, Parliament did not assemble until very late in the year, and the Financial Statement was tabled a few days after Parliament met. One cannot help thinking that there must be some reason for not tabling the Financial Statement and asking us to grant this blank cheque, as it were, before the Federal elections take place. There must be something to hide. There is no occasion to hold back the Financial Statement so late as this, and it is going to be very awkward for people to finance their businesses when they do not know what the taxation is going to be. When the Financial Statement is read, we know that new taxation will be foreshadowed, and that there will be, I suppose, new railway freights, as I do not see any other way of financing the railways.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you in favour of that?

Mr. GUNN: I remember when Mr. Hunter was on this side he used to move the adjournment of the House to call attention to the fact of the expensive railway travelling in Queensland, and that the fares and freights should be reduced. Now that this Government are in power, they have raised the freights and fares on two or three occasions as much as 40 per cent. on the carriage of cattle.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were carried at a loss previously to benefit the wealthy squatters.

Mr. GUNN: When you were in Opposition you said the fares and freights should be reduced, and now, when you are in power, you want to raise them. I could read extracts from speeches of hon. members opposite where they repeatedly blamed the Denham Government for dear freights and fares, and now you raise the freights and fares of everybody, except in the suburbs of Brisbane, because, I suppose, there are a lot of votes there that you want.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Every suburb affected by the fares is held by a Nationalist member.

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Mr. GUNN: How is it that country people have their return tickets taken away from them, when the city people have their fares left as they were, and can get return tickets.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How can a man who is only going one way have his return fare taken away from him?

Mr. GUNN: How is it you can get a return ticket to Southport or Sandgate, and yet, if you go the same distance in the country, you can only get a single ticket? I have never advocated a reduction of fares, but the occupants of the Treasury benches did so when they were in Opposition.

Regarding the Financial Statement and the new taxation which is sure to be foreshadowed there, it will be very awkward for business people, as, possibly, the taxation will be retrospective. Of course you make your salaries retrospective; there is no difficulty about financing that; and I suppose that when it comes to taxation, that will have to be retrospective also in regard to those salaries.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS interjected.

Mr. GUNN: You can ask the Treasury Department about that. I am not going to say what I have done. I have repeatedly asked questions and got nothing but evasive replies, if it is a matter of an awkward question. Not so long ago I asked how many special constables were sworn in at Townsville at the time of the strike, and was told that the information would be given when the Financial Statement was tabled; and now we find that won't be this year. What is the good of an answer like that? I understand that seventy special constables were sworn in at Townsville, and the unions were very wrath about it, and asked that they be recalled. What happened I do not know.

Another thing: The Government are printing and issuing pamphlets on socialism and other "isms." We know somebody has to be paid for that. Questions have been asked here and in the other House as to what moneys were paid to a certain gentleman, and in every case an evasive answer has been given. I would not like to mention the hon. gentleman's name, as he is an opponent of mine, but there are other gentlemen besides who have been getting paid by the Government, and we can find no record of it in the House at all.

Now the Federal elections are coming on the Government want to camouflage everything; go down South and tell the people how they fed the people of Queensland on cheap meat, how they financed the State, and blow about all they have done, but they do not want to get our criticism on the financial aspect into "Hansard" for fear that it might be circulated down South and do them injury.

At the present time we are at a great disadvantage in not having the Financial Statement, but still we are able to give some criticisms on the information disclosed by the Auditor-General. The following article appeared in the Brisbane "Telegraph" of 1st October:—

"FRENZIED FINANCE.

"HOW THE MONEY GOES.

"Points by the Auditor-General.

"It is obvious—if the financial stability of the State is to be maintained—that the gravity of the present situation

and the risk in regard to the future call for thoughtful reflection.

"Compared with 1914-15, the last year of the Liberal Administration, there has been an increase of 5.6 per cent. in the population, of 30.7 per cent. in the revenue, and of 33.2 per cent. in the expenditure. Taxation increased by 190.5 per cent. The revenue from railways increased by 5.04 per cent., and the expenditure by 53.5 per cent.

"The deficit last year was £171,988, but had a sum of £313,507 received from increased land tax and income tax been applied to the liquidation of the previous year's deficit, as was promised by Mr. Theodore in his Financial Statement, the amount would have been £485,495."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I suppose the previous year's deficit would have been as big as it was?

Mr. GUNN: If you only got the money you expected to receive, the deficit would have been very much greater than it was, but the Government were fortunate in receiving a much larger revenue than was anticipated. This next year, on account of the drought—a very serious drought—it is doubtful whether the Government will get a surplus, but the Treasurer does not seem to mind. He is lavishing his money about just as though there was no drought on at all. He wastes public money in many ways—in putting up a lime pulveriser in my district to compete with private pulverisers, and then they cannot produce as good an article as private enterprise.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes; and cheaper, too.

Mr. GUNN: It is a strange thing that the people in my electorate refused to buy it. Here are samples of the private article, and samples of the Government article. The Government evidently cannot pulverise lime. One is a fertiliser, and the other is a road metal. The "Telegraph" continues—

"Since the present Government has been managing the finances, it has accumulated deficits totalling £834,933, and it has had a record revenue in every year that it has been in office.

"The biggest revenue received by a past Government was in 1914-15, the amount being £7,202,658. Last year's revenue was £9,415,543. In five years the Labour Government has handled increases in the revenue totalling £2,212,885."

With all that increased revenue, what better off are we to-day? The railways are behind, and everything else is behind. The other day I was standing on the Tallwood platform waiting for a mixed train to come in, and one passenger waiting for that train was very anxious that it should arrive. After a while he said, "Oh, here she comes." Someone asked, "How do you know she is coming?" Then he replied, "Here is the engineer's dog." The engineer's dog was travelling 2 or 3 miles ahead of the train. (Laughter.) The article continues—

"The Commonwealth paid to the State last year more than it paid in any year since 1909-10.

"The Government reduced the debit balance of the Trust Funds from £1,216,027 to £216,027 by placing £1,000,000 of Savings Bank money on deposit with the Treasury."

They robbed the people's savings in order to square their accounts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We prefer to tax the rich sooner than rob the poor.

Mr. GUNN: The "Telegraph" continues—

"The unforeseen expenditure in 1913-19 was £1,046,475, another record for the State. A sum of £616,286 came from the Loan Funds.

"The cash balances of the various funds of the public account shows a credit of £953,061, but if the £1,000,000 of Savings Bank money placed on deposit with the Treasury were included, there would be a debit of £46,938.

"There has been an increase in the loan indebtedness in ten years of £21,305,054, the interest bill increasing by £922,416. The interest bill last year was £2,557,686.

"Owing to industrial troubles, the State has been called upon to greatly increase its expenditure on relief. The Auditor-General points out that during last year the expenditure grew out of all proportions."

We were told when this Government came into power that there would be so much work and so much industry, and everything would be so scientifically managed that we would have no unemployment and no strikes. We would have sympathetic judges and all those things, and yet we have had more strikes and more unemployment than any other Government ever had in Queensland. The "Telegraph" continues—

"The distress that is rife is indicated by the fact that, for the month of June, the State butchers' shops in the metropolitan area issued beef to the value of £135 per week.

"The Warra State Coalmine, which now has been abandoned, cost the State £47,453."

Then, the "little red book," in connection with the Warra coalmine, says—

"In the South, the Government some time ago purchased a mine at Warra, to the west of Dalby. When taken over by the State, this mine was in but a partially developed condition, and the management has had to sink some hundreds of feet further. The output will be large, and the needs of the south-western railways will be served more economically than could have been done from any other mine now producing. The property was acquired on 23rd December, 1915, for a sum of £4,000. Previous to that date the Commissioner for Railways had reported that a result of purchasing the property would be a saving in proposed capital expenditure at Chinchilla of probably £19,818, together with a saving of £23,000 in the release of eight engines, these two sums representing an interest charge of £1,912 per annum. A further resultant saving would be £469 per annum in wages. The Commissioner calculated that a reduction in capital outlay of £47,818, as well as a saving of £2,381 per annum in revenue expenditure, would be effected through coaling from the main line at Warra. The department's demands there amounted to 500 tons of coal per week, and the Commissioner suggested that the State should take

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over the Warra mine, together with its coal-bearing area. Before the purchase, the previous owners of the property had supplied 3,487 tons of coal to the Railway Department with most satisfactory results."

The thing has turned out a failure, and we have lost £47,000 over it; but they print pamphlets on the other side of the world in which they say this coal venture has turned out a great success, and one reason they gave to the British electors to vote for the Labour party was because of the great success of the Warra coalmine.

Mr. MACARTNEY: And the late Premier supported the statements.

Mr. GUNN: The late Premier went into the box in London and swore that they had made a profit out of the State coalmine.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did he swear that they made a profit when they made a loss?

Mr. MACARTNEY: He swore they were supplying coal to the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He went into the box and swore something that was not true?

Mr. GUNN: He went into the box and gave evidence with regard to the nationalisation of coalmines which would lead the people to believe that they were making big profits, and he said they were making big profits in the coalmining industry in Queensland. Then, again, we were told that they were fishing in the trawler down the bay, and that they were feeding the people of Brisbane with salmon at an extremely low price, and with some other fish—I think it was herrings. Here is an extract from a London periodical on the question.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What is the periodical? Give us all the information.

Mr. GUNN: I have no time to give all the information. It appeared in several papers, and I saw it in a dodger that was sent round at election time. This paper says—

"A TRUE FAIRY TALE OF FISH.

"They built steam trawlers, and equipped them with up-to-date appliances. To-day—they catch fish in their own State-owned steam trawlers—and sell it in State fish shops, and they have been able to reduce the retail price of fish 66 per cent. Salmon is now sold at 3d. per lb.

(Laughter.)

"The fish, like meat, is obtained and distributed for the use of the people, and not to make a profit for idle shareholders."

Then there is a lot about State hotels.

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

At 10 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. SIZER (*Fundah*): I wish to add my protest against the House adjourning without any definite assurance with regard to the Financial Statement. Perhaps, as the Premier has said, the mere tabling of the Financial Statement will not alter the position, but it will let us know how the Government intend to meet their deficit. We are strongly of opinion that additional taxation of a colossal nature will be announced, and that on that account the Financial Statement

[Mr. Gunn.

is being held over for a few weeks, in order that it may help Mr. Ryan in his hopeless fight. That gentleman is accusing the Commonwealth Government of recklessness and incompetency, and information with regard to the financial position is being kept back which would prove his own defects in that direction. It is only one of the many tricks to which we have become accustomed from the late Premier. In addition, I object strongly to this vote being passed to-night, because we cannot place any reliance on any statement which comes from the other side. Last year, certain taxation proposals were passed through the Chamber on the distinct understanding that the proceeds would be used to liquidate last year's deficit, but that has never been done. Why has the Premier broken his promise in that respect?

Then, with regard to giving notice of questions. When we ask questions which we are entitled to ask, we get no satisfaction. If there is anything in our contentions, why does the Government not come forward straightforwardly and answer the questions. The return asked for by myself as to fees paid to the Hon. Randolph Bedford has not been tabled. It does not concern me whether Randolph Bedford got £100 or £1,000, but as representative of an important constituency I am entitled, and the House is entitled, to get the information. When that information is withheld, we can only come to the conclusion that the Government have something dishonest to hide, otherwise they would be prepared to give the information to the House. We are forced to the conclusion that that gentleman, and others whom we could mention, have got something to which they are not entitled, and the Government are not willing to allay that suspicion.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are in a very unkind humour to-night.

Mr. SIZER: I intend to give facts. The hon. gentleman voted against that information being given, and I am inclined to think that before this Parliament is over he will somewhat regret that he so voted on that occasion. He will be reminded on many occasions that he voted against giving that information.

Another reason why I object to this Appropriation Bill going through is because we have had a record revenue. Despite the hon. gentleman's pamphlet, which called attention to the appalling deficits of the Liberal Governments in fifty-five years, and stated that they had built up a national debt of £52,000,000 in that time, hon. gentlemen opposite, in their short career, have raised that debt up to £61,798,164. Compared with the fifty-five years' record of the Liberal Governments, where does the hon. gentleman stand? He stands in the noose which he tried to put round other people's necks, and at the next opportunity the people will pull the rope, and the sooner the better. The Auditor-General, in his report, states that from 1914 to date the population has increased by 5.6 per cent., the revenue has increased by 30.7 per cent., and the expenditure has increased by 33.2 per cent. In view of those figures, is there not some tangible reason for our knowing where the money is coming from in the future, and how it is going to be spent. The receipts from taxation from 1914 to the present time have increased by 190.5 per cent. We are

dangerously near to the limit of taxation, and we want to know what lies ahead of us. In 1914 the Secretary for Railways was working out almost to the last fraction how much a family would have to pay with regard to the interest on the public debt.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was it correct?

Mr. SIZER: Probably it was correct at the time, and if it was an argument then, how much more is it now, as the increase in the public debt has been 29.5 per cent. I have not worked out how much per head of the population it amounts to, but when hon. gentlemen opposite came in the direct taxation per head was £1 8s., and now it is £4 10s. The expenditure on the railways has increased by a modest 53.5 per cent. In view of these facts, the absence of a Financial Statement, and the desire for a further Appropriation Bill for £2,250,000, calls for strenuous opposition from members on this side. I would not mind giving an appropriation to a scrupulously honest Government, but when we see the political tricks which the Government are prepared to perpetrate upon the people—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SIZER: I am going to lead up to the point as to why I object to this money being appropriated. We know that the consolidated revenue is contributed to by all classes of the people, irrespective of political colour, and it has always been recognised that political parties should not be subsidised by a Government. The Auditor-General draws attention to a modest item of £100 which was voted by the Government as a free gift to a soldiers' political organisation. At a recent meeting the Government were thanked for a further £1,000, which makes £1,100. We have miscellaneous items running into thousands of pounds, and I would not like to say how much of that money this political organisation got. In view of the approaching election, I am inclined to think that the Government would not stop at giving any amounts to political organisations in order to make their position secure.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you want us to give them war bonds?

Mr. SIZER: In connection with advertising the State that is all right in its way, but I do not agree with political advertising when the State have to pay for it. Advertising the political party in power is a distinct abuse of the advertising departments of the State and a dishonest act politically. We know that the Government voted a large sum to that purpose, and on looking up the unauthorised expenditure I find there is a sum of £3,860 for advertising the State. Probably that is for some of the political articles paid for in the South, and also in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What good would an article do us in the South?

Mr. SIZER: You paid a man to write them and people to circulate them. Look at the amount expended with regard to soldiers during last year. This is a matter which has puzzled me. Last year we voted £40,000 for returned soldiers, and we also voted £15,000 for maimed soldiers. The total expenditure from revenue last year was £47,825 and £10,000 on unauthorised

expenditure which accounts for the vote of last year. Then there was £15,000 for maimed soldiers, which, with the £15,000 voted last year made £30,000, but only £2,616 of that money was spent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are wrong. All that money has been handed over to trustees.

Mr. SIZER: I am not wrong, as only £2,616 has been spent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government spent every shilling. The trustees did not spend it.

Mr. SIZER: I got these figures from the Auditor-General's report. I agree that it has been handed over to trustees, but only £2,616 has been spent. On 16th May last Mr. Robilliard, Secretary of the Soldiers' Labour League, and a public servant—I do not blame him for that, because I suppose he accepted a position carrying a higher salary—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is very unjust. He was secretary of the Imperial League.

Mr. SIZER: He said in forming the Labour League that he had the authority of the Acting Premier to announce that the sum of £30,000 had been set aside to augment that £15,000 to assist the soldiers and their dependents. Where is that money? I have searched through the Auditor-General's report, but I cannot find it. The only inference is that that money is in the maimed and wounded soldiers' fund, only £2,616 of which has been spent. I would like to know from the Government was Mr. Robilliard right when he said, on 16th May, that he had the authority of the Acting Premier to say that £30,000 had been set aside. If so, where has that money gone? Was it only a matter of camouflage, or was it really the money voted by last Parliament? That is the reason why we have no confidence in the Government in their endeavour to get this Appropriation Bill through at the present moment. In connection with advertising, we are paying for advertising to spread pernicious doctrines and downright deliberate lies.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SIZER: It is distributed to influence the opinion of people overseas and members who happen to belong to the same party as hon. members opposite. Here is a sample of what Mr. Campbell, late organiser of the Labour party in Western Australia, has written—

“Ryan Government has opened up State iron mines and built large State iron and steel smelting works. Both have turned out a success. The rolling-stock for the State railways is now manufactured in State foundries, as well as most up-to-date agricultural implements. The Ryan Government has established a State line of steamships to trade around the coast of Queensland. State oil wells have been opened up. State chilling works and State freezing works have been established. State printing works were established two years ago.”

Where are the iron and steel works? That is the stuff the people of Queensland are paying to circulate. It is copied from the red book, “Socialism at Work,” a work which contains nothing but a tissue of lies from beginning to end. That is the interpretation

Mr. Sizer.]

placed upon it overseas. These dodgers are distributed in England by millions and they will be distributed in Australia during the next few weeks. To show that I object to the money being granted, I move—

“That the sum of £2,250,000 proposed to be voted be reduced by £1,000,000.”

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I beg to second the amendment. Ever since this Government have been in power they have been spending money in a most reckless and heedless manner. The debt has been increased, although during the time the Government have been in power they have had an increasing revenue. The revenue was increased by 30.7 per cent., and the expenditure was also increased by 30.3 per cent. The taxation in Queensland has almost doubled under this Government. The Government have neglected my district in the matter of railways. The earthworks were started for one railway and the rails and sleepers were brought there. That work is lying there uncompleted and is not producing revenue. I am pleased to see some sense of shame has been left to the Government, because they took away those rails and sleepers in the night time. They were too ashamed to take them away in the daytime. I would like to know how the money is going to be spent in running expensive State enterprises. We have had experience of the trawler in Queensland. I believe that the last catch of fish was not sufficient to pay for the coal consumed. Freights and fares have been increased on the people in the country, but not on the people living in the big towns and cities. The Treasurer is seeking new modes of imposing taxation to make his Government popular. It is like the conundrum, “What is the key to success?” with the answer, “The key of someone else’s money box.” (Hear, hear! and laughter.) It is only a matter of time when the State will be bankrupt if we go on as we are going. If we reduce this vote by £1,000,000, it will mean £1,000,000 less to be taken from the Savings Bank. We are protecting the depositors of the Savings Bank to that extent. We don’t trust the Government, as we do not know what they will do next.

The PREMIER: I should like to say, more especially in view of the remarks made by the hon. member who has just resumed his seat, that in supporting the [10.30 p.m.] amendment he is going to deprive the funds of the consolidated revenue to the extent of £1,000,000, which means that the hospitals, the State children, the Government employees must all suffer in consequence.

Mr. BELL: Would not the £1,250,000 pay for that?

The PREMIER: In two months; how could it? Neither would it pay anything towards the State children, the hospitals, Dunwich, or the asylums. One million pounds could be saved by a disastrous policy of that kind; and, if the Opposition stand for that kind of thing, it is as well to let the public know it. If they do not stand for that, then this amendment is only so much humbug. If the Opposition were successful in passing the amendment, it would mean that we would have to cut the services down so as to be deprived of the use of £1,000,000 in two months. That is the position.

[*Mr. Sizer.*

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think the benefits to be obtained from the amendment moved by the hon. member for Nundah, and seconded by the hon. member for Fassifern, are well worth the moving of the motion. It is desirable that we should understand exactly where we are, and the hon. the Premier is not going to frighten us by suggesting that the public servants are going to suffer, or that we are going to suffer by doing our duty by the people of the country. We have a duty to do, and we are prepared to carry it out. (Hear, hear!) It is necessary to place some check upon this somewhat reckless and extravagant Government which is driving the State to the verge of destruction as quickly as they can without any regard to the possibility of relief at a later period. The hon. gentleman referred earlier in the evening to the dates on which the Financial Statements have been offered to this House in recent years.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I remind the hon. member that the time allowed him under the Standing Orders for discussing the motion has expired. I ask him to confine his remarks to the amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I have only to say that that hon. gentleman challenged this side in regard to the dates of the tabling of Financial Statements previously. In 1908 the House met in November, and the Financial Statement was tabled on the 7th December. In 1909 it met on the 2nd November, and the Financial Statement was tabled on the 18th November. During those years general elections took place considerably after the beginning of the year, and the consequence was a late sitting, aided by the absence of Mr. Kidston on one occasion. I notice, according to this evening’s “Telegraph,” that it is rumoured that the Government are proposing to entertain the purchase of the City Electric Light Company. I do not know whether there is any truth in it or not, but I would tell hon. gentlemen that if we make use of those rumours it is simply for the want, on the Government’s part, of giving us the information which we ought to receive.

The PREMIER: We cannot give you information about things we knew nothing about.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I take it that the “Telegraph” is not likely to print a rumour of that sort unless there is something in it. It is a case of “Where there is smoke there is fire.” However, if there is anything in it, it means a very, very large purchase price; it may only be paid for by paper, but, nevertheless, it will add to the country’s debt. It is also rumoured—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not discussing the amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That the Government intend to purchase the American meat-works—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: We are voting for the purpose of Trust Funds a large sum of money, £250,000 of which is to go to Trust Funds and £600,000 to go to Loan Fund. I say that we should oppose that vote, if only to put a check on the Government against these undertakings by which they are going to endanger the financial stability of the

State to a great degree, and it is reasonable to expect that we should do all we possibly can to restrain such action.

The PREMIER: Have you not heard a rumour that we intend to purchase the Orient line of steamers? (Laughter.)

Mr. MACARTNEY: No. I am confining myself to those rumours which do not appear unlikely from the statements made in support of them. No one can realise what the Government may do without the authority of Parliament, after the purchases they have made during the past few years. Surely we must judge them by their past actions, and if these expenditures are contemplated, it is a positive danger to pile the debt on the shoulders of the people. This morning we had an intimation that the Government have commandeered all the meat supplies in Queensland. That, I take it, is done in the interest of the State butchers' shops, which is managed from the Trust Funds which are involved in the motion, the reduction of which is now being moved. That is a very serious matter. They have started these State butchers' shops under extraordinary circumstances—in the first instance, at the expense of the Imperial Government and the troops serving abroad. They succeeded in getting an arrangement with the meat companies, under which they got the meat at 3½d., while they increased the price to be paid by the Imperial Government to 4½d.

The PREMIER: Do you mean to say that, as a result, the Imperial Government paid more for the Queensland meat than for the New South Wales meat or New Zealand meat?

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am not going into that question now. I am talking about the way in which these butchers' shops were established, and pointing out that they are managed from Trust Funds, for which portion of this vote is required. The period of war has now disappeared. I understand peace is to be declared on Saturday, and three months after the declaration of peace the agreement between the meat companies and the Government will have expired. I do not know whether the meat companies are behind the proposition which the Government make—that is, whether they are in agreement with it or not—with a view to forcing the hands of the producer. It may or may not be so. We are not taken into the confidence of the Government. Reading between the lines in the newspaper, I understand the Government are still in negotiation with the companies while this proclamation has been held over the companies and producers alike. For the purpose of making a success of the State butchers' shops, not only did they make this special arrangement at the expense of the Imperial Government—I think I might say the Imperial Government were fleeced—but they have taken from the Commonwealth Government a sum of £20,000 as an alleged payment of storage, which they have never paid.

We find, now that the opportunity for fleecing the Imperial Government has disappeared, that an attempt is being made to browbeat the producers of this State by commandeering—under the Sugar Acquisition Act of all Acts—all the meat supplies of the State. By doing a thing of that sort the

Government are giving a shock to the community. What they can do to one line of business in Queensland they can do to another; they can do to the financial institutions, in the shape of forced loans or they can do in regard to the moneys in the Savings Bank; they can do it in regard to any other undertaking; and the time is coming when the people who are engaged in enterprise, or who are prepared to engage in enterprise, will hesitate before they make any attempt to enter into any enterprise, or even to carry on existing enterprise, with the result that stagnation, want of employment, and an exaggeration of the unfortunate position which exists in Queensland to-day will be brought about. There, again, the action the Government have taken is going to be of very great danger to a great industry. I suppose the meat industry is one of the greatest industries in Queensland to-day. It is one that has been established after a great deal of trouble and care on the part of the producers in days gone by, and it has improved beyond measure during the war, and it offers for the future a great prospect for the people of Queensland, besides offering that great increase in production which is necessary to stabilise and set matters right. That industry is going to be penalised, whatever the meaning of it is, and I say it is going to do irretrievable injury. It is going to reduce production to no end, and it is going to be a bad thing for Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: Two pounds five shillings per cwt. is what they are paying.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I do not know anything about prices. The business of the State shops has been started on a false basis, and the Government are only meeting the position which was bound to arise in the course of time, and they are endeavouring to do it at the expense of the producers of the State, and at the expense of the State itself. It amounts to this: that for the sake of a small section of the consumers in the towns and cities—because it is only a small section that derives any benefit from the State shops—they are practically attacking the whole of the producers of this State. At the present time everybody knows what the position of Queensland is. We know it is in a state of drought from one end to the other, and it is a matter of serious doubt as to whether there will be a sufficiency of fat stock to serve even the purpose of the Government. Nobody can say what will take place in the next two or three months, and in speaking of that we see the doubtful position in which the Government State station speculation is in at the present moment. I understand, as it is stated in this afternoon's paper by Mr. Austin, that they are feeling the position. It is admitted that the Government cattle have had to be removed from Dillalah Station for agistment, and it is only the other day I ran against a man who passed through Dillalah Station within the last few weeks, and I have been informed that the losses there have been a great deal heavier than anyone has any idea of. If this drought continues, it may mean a very serious loss to the Government in the number of stock on those stations. We have heard that the Government claim a profit on their State stations.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not dealing with the amendment.

Mr. Macartney.]

Mr. MACARTNEY: The vote here is to enable the Government to go further and further into the region of dangerous speculations.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The amendment is to reduce the vote by £1,000,000.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The amendment is to prevent the Government entering these dangerous speculations. How they can say there is a definite profit on the State stations under the present conditions existing in Queensland I fail to understand, because at present it is impossible to muster the cattle so as to give a definite and correct statement as to the stock on the various stations. It can only be an assumption, after all, as to what stock are left on the stations, and we have to take the balance-sheet subject to any doubts that may remain on that particular score. I do not want to take up an undue amount of time, but even if we had hours of time I do not think we could deal fully with all the questions that arise for discussion in connection with the position of Queensland to-day, and which would be discussed if the Financial Statement were before the House before we should be called upon to vote for the Government one single penny extra. The hon. member for Carnarvon and the hon. member for Nundah have called attention to the information that has been asked for in the form of questions for months past, and the answers that have been given from time to time are practically a refusal of information. We are voting money on this occasion for the Department of Justice, as well as for other departments. There is a return which for years past has been tabled before the present date, and about which there can be no difficulty whatever in tabling, which will be of use to members of this House, and that is the table relating to the fees paid to barristers and solicitors for the year ending 30th June last.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: We are voting money for the Department of Justice, and we have not got the information which enables us to say whether that expenditure is the correct thing or not. For years past it has been a question as to the amount of fees that have been drawn personally by the late leader of the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: We have not been able to get that information.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: I quite realise that it is an unpleasant subject. Nevertheless, the House is entitled to the information.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member would be quite in order in discussing that question on the main resolution, but an amendment has been moved. The hon. member must obey my call to order in that regard.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I am going to make my remarks applicable to the amendment before the House. The question before the House is to reduce the vote by £1,000,000, and the only thing is to allow the hon. gentleman to understand all the dangers that we fear from the non-placing of the financial position before the House and before the people of the State. I am pointing out the information we have not got which would enable us to intelligently deal with the financial position, and that is one of the

[Mr. Macartney.

matters that I particularly refer to. I complain that we have not got that information which we ought to get. The returns that have been moved for and ordered by this House have not been tabled. We heard the Clerk this afternoon reading a list of returns ordered by the House which have not been tabled and no reason whatever has been given for the non-tabling of the information. A return has been ordered in connection with the number of prisoners who have been discharged from His Majesty's prisons during the last three or four years. Rightly or wrongly, the people of this State have come to the conclusion that a great liberty has been taken by the Government in connection with the exercise of the powers of mercy without any reasonable justification, without due consideration of the case, and without obtaining those reports which it has been usual to obtain from the judiciary of the country, and the country is anxious to have that information in order to judge of the Government's administration and as to whether it is a right thing that we should vote moneys which the Government are asking for on this occasion. I say that the Government, by refusing to give that information, are justifying the accumulation of suspicion which has been gaining from day to day in the minds of the people of maladministration of some of the most important affairs of this State. The late Premier has announced in the South that he has given up the most lucrative of positions for the purpose of going into Federal politics. He is posing there as a patriot who is suffering in pocket for the interests of his country.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. MACARTNEY: We are trying to get the information which will show us—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I must impress on the hon. member that he must deal with the amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY: I think I have a perfect right to refer to the absence of that return which has been ordered by this House, which ought to have been tabled months ago.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may show cause for reducing the vote to the extent of £1,000,000.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The object of reducing the vote by £1,000,000 is to check the Government until such time as they do that which is their obvious duty, in giving information to this House and to the country.

The PREMIER: It is purely an obstructive amendment.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman may call it what he will, but it is a course of action which the hon. gentleman has brought about. The House met on 2nd August, quite early in the year. We might have had the Estimates dealt with; we might have been out of this House by this time, and all the ordinary business of Parliament have been completed. But the hon. gentleman dawdled with the business of Parliament during the early portion of the session; he has failed to table the Financial Statement; he has failed to table the Estimates. Consequently we have not been able to go into those matters in the way in which we ought, and we have to take the best means at our disposal for the purpose of dealing with them. I am endeavouring to deal with them as fully as I can, and with as much respect to the position which you, Mr. Bertram,

occupy, as I possibly can; because I realise that you have been fair to us. I realise that you have not unfairly pressed the Standing Orders against us, and I believe you will take a fair view of things and give us at least a fair show under all the circumstances. Having that feeling in the matter, I do not wish by any means to trespass on the privilege you extend to me, or take any advantage of it beyond a legitimate advantage. I think if there is any trouble about this matter the hon. gentleman can accept the fullest responsibility himself. Another matter I would like some information about is this: The hon. member for Nundah referred to the soldiers' vote in moving this amendment. He referred to a very large sum of money that has been passed over to trustees, which has been voted during the last session or two of Parliament. I say it is a most important thing that we should have the Estimates on the table in order to show what the intentions of the Government are in regard to the soldiers for the future. If the Estimates go over, as they are likely to do, until after the Federal election, the Government can do just what they like. I say we are entitled to all information with regard to proposed taxation, if there is going to be an increase of railway fares and freights, the moneys that are going to be provided for main roads—if there is anything serious in that position. We are entitled to all information as to what the Government are prepared to do in connection with the soldiers' settlement, apart from what the Commonwealth provides, and what they are prepared to do for maimed soldiers, seeing that they are taking a considerable amount of credit and dealing in a manner that can hardly be said to be legitimate amongst the returned soldiers.

Mr. VOWLES: I wish to take the opportunity of supporting this amendment. Also, I would like to take exception to the statement of the Premier that it is an obstructive amendment. In the past, when hon. gentlemen now on the Treasury benches were sitting in Opposition, they always brought forward a frivolous amendment for a reduction of the vote by £1. When an hon. member brings forward a frivolous amendment like that, we know there is no business in it—it is only for the sake of talk; but when we have moved the reduction of a huge sum of money, such as £1,000,000, it savours of business right away. For the Premier to contend that it is going to interfere with the salaries of public servants is all bunkum; or the people in Dunwich, or any other place. The fact is, it is going to limit the time that the Government will have funds, and will compel them to come back to the House to get further Supply at a sooner date than they otherwise would have to do. That is the only effect of it. There will be no shortage of money; there will be sufficient to go round for a month. It is our desire, too, that it should be so, because we should not be asked for Supply at the present time. We should be sitting here carrying out the functions of Parliament, discussing legislation, waiting for and dealing with this Financial Statement—this bone of contention which, I presume, will have all the information that we are seeking.

Mr. BRENNAN: Don't you think the Federal elections are important?

Mr. VOWLES: I think they may be important to the Federal people. They are

important to members of Parliament, so much so that we will all record our votes. We might as well say that every person in business on State election day should neglect his business and go out on the game of politics.

Mr. BRENNAN: So they do.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not think they do. We have been sent here to transact the affairs of the State of Queensland, not to mess about with Federal politics. There would be no occasion for this to-night if we were doing our duty. Dealing with this reduction, there are other matters to which I would like to refer. One of the reasons why I think we should reduce the vote considerably is that our experience has taught us that the Government are not to be trusted with too much money. They are like a little boy who goes to a "show" for the first time, being given 2s. 6d. when he is used to having only 6d. He goes mad. That is what happens with this Government when there is a little credit. They say, "We will have another surplus. We will put in £5,000 or £10,000 out of the funds we have in hand and make another speculation." Unfortunately those chickens are coming home to roost at the present time. The leader of the Opposition said he saw a gentleman who had been at Dillalah some three weeks ago. I came down with one on Tuesday morning who had just come from Dillalah, and he told me the cattle there were dying wholesale. He was a man whose word I would take. He had no axe to grind when he was giving me that information. He told me further that if this drought continues another month, on this new station which the Government have bought every hoof will die because they will not be able to take them away. They will simply perish there. That comes back to the question of dealing in stations. For an object lesson, just look at the purchase of Mount Hutton, and see what the Auditor-General says. Should we trust these people with so much money when we have the experience of the past before us in this history of Mount Hutton Station? Mr. Hardacre told us, on one occasion, that £35,000 was the profit, while Mr. Hunter, the late hon. member for Maranoa, said that they had made a profit of £45,000; but the accounts showed that there was a loss on the transaction of something [11 p.m.] like £5,559. The Auditor-General pointed out how the figures were juggled in the Lands Department in assessing the value of the lease, which was valued at £1,100, with improvements, two years before the purchase. There were a few years to run on the lease, and they valued it, first of all, at £3,500, and they eventually put it in the books at £14,379. That faked entry was made. That amount of money was taken off the value of the stock, so as to create a fictitious profit at the beginning, and put on the lease, and it was sanctioned by the then Minister for Public Lands, Mr. Hunter. When the Lands Department had to resume Mount Hutton for the purpose of soldiers' settlement, the State Stations Commissioner said, "You have entered the value of the lease at £14,000 in your books, and when you resume it you will have to give us credit for that amount." The Commissioner was doing that at the expense, not of the Lands Department, but of the returned soldiers who would take up the land when it was thrown open for selection.

Mr. Fowles.]

Instead of making a profit of £35,000 or £45,000, as was first alleged, there was a loss of something like £5,559, and only then by giving credit for some 700 head of cattle. In addition to that, the Government had to pay some £3,300 to Morrissey and Sons for breach of contract. They undertook, in a most unbusinesslike way, to deliver a particular class of stock which they had purchased on a book muster, and that stock was not there after they had had the country three months. I believe there were between 2,000 and 3,000 head short. We are asked to believe that the Government is making huge profits in other directions in connection with their cattle stations, but must we not be guided by the results of this one transaction which has been cleared up? If there have been losses in connection with that station, which is contiguous to Roma, there must be a great shortage of stock on stations further out. Yet we find the Government, when somebody wants to put something on them in the shape of a station, as long as they can become big monopolists and control large numbers of cattle in Australia, prepared to do business.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think the vendors of all these stations are vagabonds or rogues?

Mr. VOWLES: No, I do not say so; but I know that you could have purchased one station much cheaper from the mortgagees than what you paid to the owner. The fact remains that there are shortages on these stations. The management is not the same as it would be under a private firm. According to evidence given in our courts in criminal cases, the Government is regarded as a fair mark. It seems to be held that you are entitled to steal from the Government if you do not get caught. When we know how many pastoralists have gone to the wall through bad seasons in the west of Queensland, why should we give money to the Government to encourage them to go into this wild speculation? The only way we can put a check upon them is by giving them limited means. There are other reasons why we should reduce this vote. We have, during this session, elicited information of a remarkable nature with reference to the Railway Department. We find by answers to questions that the effective return per head in the department in 1914 was £102 lls. 11d., whereas, to-day it is reduced to £17 3s. 9d. The Government cannot manage an institution like the railways, which are regarded on all sides as being a dumping institution and in many cases a benevolent institution.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you suggest retrenchment?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not. I have answered that trap on many occasions. My sound business reply to it is that the whole thing needs reorganising. I do not say that you should deprive any of the men of their wages, but if you have 25 per cent. of unnecessary men—some say 40 per cent.—surely you could put them on to work that is going to be reproductive!

The HOME SECRETARY: How could you without starting new enterprises?

Mr. VOWLES: Cannot you start new works?

Mr. HARTLEY: You cannot, because the cost of material is 200 per cent. higher than it was.

[*Mr. Vowles.*

Mr. VOWLES: Could you not make roads for a start, clear prickly-pear, and improve the Government estate in many directions? I have always said that instead of having two men doing one man's work you should put them on to doing something that is productive. Another outstanding feature is that according to Votes and Proceedings, page 49, the number of men in the department has increased by 3,384 since 1914, although the trains are running nearly 1,400,000 miles less. Can anything be more eloquent as to whether the department is over-staffed?

Mr. HARTLEY: It is not over-staffed.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the first time I have heard that. Railway men will tell you that it is over-staffed by 25 per cent. I think they will admit that in the Industrial Court any day.

Mr. HARTLEY: You want to put off the firemen and drivers.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not, but if this amount of money is expended, we ought to see that we get an adequate return.

Mr. HARTLEY: You cannot get that with inefficient engines.

Mr. VOWLES: Why is our rolling-stock allowed to get into the deplorable condition in which it is to-day? How is it that trains start late and do not come in to time? New South Wales can run reasonably to schedule, and Victoria can do the same. Why, if we have the most up-to-date plant in the Southern hemisphere at the Ipswich shops, can we not expect to do something reasonable in that direction too? I will give two illustrations that occurred within the last few weeks. I go first to the electorate of the Minister for Lands. In Charleville the train was not in to time, and the public saw an engine coming in alone. They had started without sufficient coal, and had to go to Charleville to get coal and then go back for the train. A week later the same thing happened as regards water. Does that not make you wonder whether there is not some question of overtime? Whoever is responsible gets paid in any case, whether there is a delay or not. If a man goes out without sufficient coal or water, should he not be penalised? Should he be paid overtime? That sort of thing happened twice between Jondaryan and Ipswich, and the hon. member for Aubigny was on both trains. It is a lamentable state of affairs to think that we can have such absent-minded lot of individuals running our train services. If a man can forget coal and water he might forget something else, and run into a station and carry away the gates and everything else, perhaps, because he is thinking of his overtime or his rise. These things are no joke where human lives are at stake.

Mr. GLEDSON: It is a peculiar thing that it is always the poor workman you attack.

Mr. VOWLES: Naturally we must deal with the workman, because he receives the money. I have no doubt that the bosses the hon. member refers to are not immaculate, but I do not see how they can be responsible in cases like that. I think it must be the experience of every member of the Opposition that we should curtail the vote in order that the Government will not have the chance to go in for any further "wild-cat" schemes.

Amendment (*Mr. Sizer's*) put and negatived.

Original question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The resolution was received and agreed to by the House.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

The TREASURER moved—

“(a) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1919-1920, a further sum not exceeding £1,400,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

“(b) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1919-1920, a further sum not exceeding £250,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

“(c) That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account for the service of the year 1919-1920, a further sum not exceeding £600,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.”

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

The resolutions were received and agreed to by the House.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 3.

FIRST AND SECOND READING.

On the motion of the TREASURER, a Bill founded on the resolutions received from Committee of Ways and Means was introduced and read a first and second time.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clause 1—“*Appropriation*”—

Mr. MACARTNEY: Perhaps the Treasurer can inform the Committee up to what date the Supply now asked for will carry us.

The TREASURER: It is impossible to mention the actual date, but I indicated on the motion for the suspension of the Standing Orders that the Supply asked for will carry us on till the mid-month pay in January. The Supply already granted will cover us till the middle of this month, and this Supply will carry us on for another two months.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2, 3, 4, and the preamble put and passed.

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

THIRD READING.

The Bill was read a third time, passed, and ordered to be transmitted to the Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

The House adjourned at half-past 11 o'clock p.m.