

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY 1920

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 7 JANUARY, 1920.

ABSENCE OF SPEAKER.

The CLERK: I have to announce that Mr. Speaker is unable to be present in his place this day.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr. Bertram, *Maree*) thereupon took the chair at half-past 3 o'clock p.m.

ELECTIONS JUDGE.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have to inform the House that the following letter has been received by Mr. Speaker:—

"Judges' Chambers, Brisbane,
"6th January, 1920.

"Sir,

"I have the honour, in pursuance of section 102 of the Elections Act of 1915, to inform you that the Honourable Mr. Justice Real will be the judge to preside at sittings of the elections tribunal for the year one thousand nine hundred and twenty.

"I have the honour to be,

"Sir,

"Your most obedient servant,

"POPE A. COOPER,

"Chief Justice.

"The Honourable the Speaker."

QUESTIONS.

INKERMAN IRRIGATION SCHEME.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What progress has been made with the Inkerman Irrigation scheme in respect to (a) surveys, (b) line construction, (c) well-sinking, (d) power house construction?

"2. Have there been any delays in the works; if so, from what causes.

"3. When is it estimated the works will be completed?

"4. How many men are employed on the works?"

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

"1. (a) Completed; (b) practically completed; (c) thirty-three wells have been completed, and this part of the scheme is progressing as quickly as material for lining the wells can be procured; (d) proceeding at a satisfactory rate of progress.

"2. Temporary delays have occurred owing to the difficulty in obtaining material.

"3. A date cannot, at present, be stated, but the works will be pushed on to completion with all expedition.

"4. At 1st December, 1919, ninety-four."

PRISONS REPORT.

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

"When will the report of the Comptroller of Prisons be available to members of the House?"

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

"The report is embodied in the general report submitted by the Under Secretary."

SUGGESTED FELICITATIONS TO PRIME MINISTER.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Premier—

"In pursuance of the policy adopted by him in congratulating a political party upon winning certain municipal elections in London recently, will he now felicitate the Prime Minister of Australia upon his splendid victory over I.W.W.-ism, Bolshevism, and disloyalty, on behalf of the people of Queensland?"

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

"As this question contains an expression of partisan opinion, it is clearly at variance with the Standing Orders."

(Opposition laughter.)

FREIGHTS ON SUGAR-CANE.

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

"Will the recent increase in freight rates on the State railways apply to sugar-cane, and, if so, to what extent at the various mileages?"

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

"I would refer the honourable member to 'Government Gazettes' Nos. 334 and 335, which I laid on the table of the House yesterday."

SUGAR PURCHASED FROM JAVA.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Premier—

"1. Is he correctly reported in the Press as saying, when speaking in Mackay in November last, 'That the Colonial Sugar Refining Company were parties to a transaction in which sugar was purchased in Java, twelve months ago, at the rate of £12 a ton, the same sugar being subsequently sold to the Commonwealth at nearly £50 per ton'; also, in saying 'That Billy Hughes knew who did it'?

"2. Is he aware that the general manager of the Colonial Sugar Refining Company has written to the Press as follows:—'At no time have we been concerned in speculative transactions in Java,' and generally denying the truth of the Premier's utterance in this regard?

"3. Is he also aware that Mr. Hughes, when at Castlemaine recently, alluded to this statement of his as follows:—'Referring to the statement of Mr. Theodore, the Premier of Queensland, that the Colonial Sugar Refining Company had obtained 100,000 tons of cheap sugar from Java, and was making huge profits,' Mr. Hughes said, 'There were three or four kinds of lies in that statement. If they could imagine a snake with heads at both ends and one in the middle they could imagine what kind of a lie it was.' That Mr. Hughes also stated 'He himself brought the sugar from Mauritius, and the cheapest he got it at was £22 per ton. Mr. Theodore's statement was a lie from beginning to end.'

"4. Was the Premier sure of his facts when making this very grave charge, and whence did he obtain them?"

"5. If not, for what purpose did he make it just on the eve of an election?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 to 5. The statement attributed to me in the first paragraph of the question is not altogether accurate. What I said in effect was this: 'The Commonwealth Government were purchasing sugar in Java for which they were paying as high a price as £50 per ton.' This sugar had previously been secured from Java millers by speculators at £12 and upwards per ton. As the Commonwealth Government were purchasing sugar in Java from these speculators, someone had evidently made a big profit out of the transaction, and I asked whether the Colonial Sugar Refining Company knew anything about it."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS. Hear, hear!

LOAN ACCOUNT CREDIT.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. What amount of money was standing to the credit of Loan Account on 31st December last?"

"2. What amount of money has been spent from Loan Account since the 30th June, 1919, to 31st December, 1919?"

"3. What is the total amount of money that has been received on Loan Account from all sources since the 30th June, 1919, to 31st December, 1919?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. £701,826.

"2. £1,996,684.

"3. £1,300,122."

LOAN MONEY RECEIVED FROM COMMONWEALTH AND SAVINGS BANK.

HON. W. H. BARNES asked the Treasurer—

"1. What amount of loan money has been received from the Commonwealth Government since 30th June, 1919, to 31st December, 1919?"

"2. Has he received any further sums of money on loan from the Commissioner of the Savings Bank since 30th June, 1919, last, and, if so, what is the total amount?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. £762,808.

"2. No."

PARTICULARS OF LOAN FLOATED IN LONDON.

HON. W. H. BARNES asked the Treasurer—

"1. What amount of money has he received on account of the loan recently floated in London?"

"2. What amount of money has he still to receive on account of that loan?"

"3. What were the net proceeds of the loan recently floated in London?"

"4. How much of the loan has already been paid to the Government?"

"5. When are the next payments to be made?"

"6. How much of it was appropriated to the payment of the half-year's interest in London?"

"7. What proportion is being earmarked for developmental works in Queensland?"

"8. Did investors in the loan recently floated tender for it upon the understanding that the Queensland Government would relieve them of all Imperial taxation charges?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1. £340,000.

"2. Approximately £1,580,000. Until the expenses of the issue are known a definite amount cannot be given.

"3. It is estimated that the net proceeds will be £1,920,000.

"4. See answer to No. 1.

"5. February, 1920.

"6. None. The ex-Treasurer should know that interest on the debt is not appropriated from loans raised.

"7. Such amount as Parliament may appropriate.

"8. No. Investors well knew that the Queensland Government had no power to relieve them of Imperial taxation."

COST OF PREMIER'S TOUR IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*), for Mr. Bebbington, asked the Premier—

"What was the total cost to the State of his recent tour in North Queensland, inclusive of accommodation, travelling allowance during absence from Brisbane, steamer fares, special trains, and other incidentals of himself and staff?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The information will be obtained."

DUTIES OF CERTAIN STATE EMPLOYEES.

Mr. FRY asked the Premier—

"1. Upon what duties were (a) Mr. A. T. Ellis, secretary to the Imperial Meat Board, (b) Mr. Broadbent, Parliamentary Secretary to the Government, (c) Mr. Saunders, assistant in the Justice Department, engaged between 27th October and 30th November, 1919?"

"2. If all, or any, of these State employees were absent from Queensland during that period, what were the dates of their departure from and return to Brisbane?"

"3. By whom were their travelling expenses, during their absence from the State, paid, and what was the total cost of their journeyings in each case to the State of Queensland, or to the Imperial Meat Fund?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1 to 3. Inquiries will be made."

DEBENTURE-HOLDERS AND INCOME TAX.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Treasurer—

"Do holders of debentures received in payment for State stations have to pay State and Federal income tax on such debentures?"

The TREASURER replied—

"All Queensland Government debentures are exempt from payment of Federal and State income tax."

COST, ETC., OF PRINTING PAMPHLET.

Mr. GUNN asked the Premier—

"1. What was the cost of printing a pamphlet entitled, 'Summary of various administrative actions of the Labour Government in Queensland during 1918,' issued by the authority of Edward G. Theodore, Acting Premier and Treasurer?"

"2. How many copies were printed, and where can they be obtained?"

"3. Were any circulated outside Australia?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. £44.

"2. 500. Copies may be obtained by hon. members at the office of the Chief Secretary.

"3. No."

COST OF PRINTING ADDRESSES OF LATE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION.

Mr. SIZER (*Vundah*) asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"1. At whose expense was the book containing the official addresses of the late Minister for Public Instruction, Mr. Hardacre, produced?"

"2. If it was printed at State expense, what was its total cost to the State?"

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

"1 and 2. I am advised that the cost will be £49 17s. 3d., and that the expenditure is to be defrayed by the Department of Public Instruction."

COST OF HOME SECRETARY'S TOUR IN NORTH QUEENSLAND.

Mr. SIZER asked the Home Secretary—

"What was the total cost to the State of his tour in North Queensland during November and December, 1919?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"The information will be obtained."

DATE OF INCREASE IN RAILWAY FARES.

Mr. SIZER asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. On what date did the Government decide to increase the railway fares?"

"2. On what dates were the new tickets under the revised rates issued?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. Fares and freights were slightly increased as from 1st January, 1920.

"2. New tickets were not issued."

DETAILS OF INCREASED FREIGHTS AND FARES.

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What are the details of the recent increases in (a) freights, (b) fares, on the Queensland railways?"

"2. What is the total amount of revenue likely to accrue to the State through each increase during the year 1920?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. The details are contained in 'Government Gazettes' Nos. 334 and 335, which I laid upon the table yesterday.

"2. The information is contained in the Treasurer's Financial Statement."

WINTON-LONGREACH RAILWAY.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"In view of the fact that sixty men are available for railway construction work at Winton, will he take steps to immediately cause sufficient material to be stored at Winton to enable an early start to be made with the construction of the Winton-Longreach Railway from the Winton end?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"Yes."

STATE IRON AND STEEL WORKS.

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

"1. Are the Government serious in their intention to establish a State iron and steel works?"

"2. Has a site for such works been selected?"

"3. When will the recommendations and reports of Mr. Brophy, regarding the claims of various sites, be made known?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. Yes.

"2. No.

"3. Without avoidable delay."

SUGGESTED RELIEF TO FARMERS AND SETTLERS.

Mr. CORSER asked the Premier—

"Will the Government create a fund from loan moneys for the immediate relief of farmers and settlers who, with their families, are (a) denied many of the necessities of life owing to the past continued drought; (b) will be hampered under existing conditions in their desire to immediately produce from their lands, without special monetary assistance to secure stock, seeds, etc.?"

The PREMIER replied—

"The matter will receive consideration."

SUPPLY OF ARSENIC FOR CLEARING PEAR.

Mr. CORSER asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. In recognition of the State's duty to undertake some part of the responsibility of clearing pear, will the Government supply State arsenic free to pear selectors to assist them in such operation?"

"2. Why are exorbitant railway freight charges made on the carriage of State arsenic to pear selectors, when in the past arsenic has been carried free on our railways?"

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

"1. The State has recognised its duty in the matter of clearing prickly-pear, by giving arsenic to landholders at £48 to £50 per ton below the present market rate.

"2. Arsenic was carried free when full market rates were paid for it by landholders and when used for the purpose of destroying pear."

FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS AND SOLICITORS.

Mr. PETRIE asked the Minister for Justice—

"When will the return relating to fees paid to barristers and solicitors, which was asked for by the House on 13th August last, be tabled?"

HON. J. MULLAN (*Flinders*) replied—

"Early next week."

WAYS AND MEANS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

(*Mr. Smith, Mackay, in the chair.*)

Question (proposed new taxation) stated.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*), on rising, was received with Opposition "Hear, hears!"

HON. J. G. APPEL (loudly): Hear, hear! (Government laughter and interruption.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I desire to say, in commencing, that in any remarks I may make this afternoon I am going to confine them more particularly to the Financial Statement itself rather than deal with the new taxation proposals as outlined very fully by the Treasurer yesterday. I recognise that the proposals which are to be laid before the Committee are proposals which require a great deal of consideration, and I further recognise that when the Bills relating to those proposals are introduced fuller time will be given to hon. members to discuss them and a more complete explanation will be given by the Treasurer in connection therewith.

First of all, I want to say that I think no one could follow the Treasurer without coming to the conclusion that if ever there was a Statement which was full of padding the Statement delivered yesterday was that Statement. Right from the beginning to the end, it seems to me, it was a Statement that very largely was full of padding, put in for the express purpose of hiding some of those glaring mistakes which the Government have made during the past twelve months, in continuation of the mistakes that they have so consistently been making ever since they accepted office. Now, I want to remind the Treasurer that, when he was sitting on this side of the House, he repeatedly raised objections to the Financial Statement's being late when it was delivered from the other side when this party were sitting there, and he also repeatedly expressed the firm conviction that it should be delivered as early as possible in the financial year. And yet we find that on this occasion January has come and a special session of Parliament has been called. Why? What the Opposition said before the Government went into recess has been proved to be

perfectly correct. The Financial Statement was not kept back because it was necessary from a State point of view so much as to assist in another direction—to try to help the other side in the Federal elections.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Nonsense!

HON. J. G. APPEL: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes. There is no doubt that if some of the matters which are referred to to-day in the Financial Statement had been before the public during the time of the Federal elections, no matter what the verdict has been—as it is known to-day—the verdict would have been worse than it is so far as Queensland is concerned from a Labour point of view. Hon. members say "Nonsense," but the fact remains that the Statement was deliberately held back to assist in another direction. The House knows how far that is correct.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: It did more harm than good.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I think that the hon. member who has interjected has let the cat out of the bag, when he says that it did more harm than good, because the Government's action created in the minds of all sensible people a feeling of distrust, there is no doubt, a very great deal of distrust in the minds of the community generally. Dealing with the situation as we find it to-day, I want to ask, "Were not the fears of the public right when they thought that they would find that the Statement would be loaded with taxation, a continuation of the taxation for which I think the present Government hold at least a record?" There is no question that if ever a Government have taxed, and taxed, and taxed again, it is the present Government, and the public outside were perfectly justified in feeling that there was going to be extreme taxation and that the Government themselves were holding back the Financial Statement for the reason I have mentioned.

Might I now draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the Treasurer—the Premier—was out in a great deal of the forecast which he made in connection with the finances? For instance, referring to the previous year's forecast, he anticipated a debit of £17,618. What was the result? A debit of £171,938. And bear in mind that that was not brought about as a result of falling off in revenue. One could understand that if there had been a falling off in revenue the expectations of the Government might not have been realised. But it was not so. The Treasurer knows, as well as he knows he is sitting on that seat this afternoon, that the anticipations put before the Committee more than twelve months ago were under what he realised so far as the revenue is concerned. We come along here to-day and are face to face, not only with an increased revenue, but also an increased expenditure, and a very much bigger deficiency than was anticipated. I say that it is perfectly certain that the Treasurer was woefully out in his calculations at the beginning of the last financial year. He utterly misjudged much of the capabilities of Queensland.

I want to deal with some generalities before coming to figures. I notice that the Treasurer took exception to the fact that we had criticised the failure on the part of the Treasurer to place certain moneys which should have been specifically earmarked for a specific purpose, and that he had said we

[*Hon. W. H. Barnes.*]

have failed to say what should have been done with those moneys other than what has been done with them. I want to say that if we failed we were in particularly good company. Does the Treasurer not know that the Auditor-General, in his last annual report, drew special attention to the matter? And when an officer of Parliament, acting only as an officer of Parliament, draws attention to a thing like that, is it not a fair thing that members of this House, relying on the Auditor-General for information, should criticise the Government on the same lines? And yet some of the padding in the Statement introduced by the Treasurer refers to that.

THE PREMIER: Can you say what fund we should have put them into except the Consolidated Revenue Fund?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It should have been earmarked for a specific purpose.

THE PREMIER again interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have the floor just now, and the Treasurer will have an opportunity of replying to me later on. The fact is that the Opposition and the Auditor-General say that if money was specifically raised it should be so applied. Did not this House, at the instigation of the Treasurer, specially earmark that money?

THE PREMIER: No.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to ask the Treasurer—did he not bring down special legislation to get that money?

THE PREMIER: It was the subject of legislation, of course.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Now the Treasurer is quibbling. He specifically brought down legislation so that he could deal with the proceeds in a specific way, and the Auditor-General says that he failed to do that, and the Opposition confirm what the Auditor-General says. I notice that, on page 5 of his Statement, the Treasurer refers to the scarcity of employment in the agricultural and pastoral industries. I want to draw attention to the fact that the Treasurer knows, in my judgment, that he has wilfully and deliberately avoided something when he refers to the scarcity of employment. Is the scarcity of employment particularly noticeable in those industries he refers to? I say "No." The scarcity of employment in industries arises in this way—that in places like Townsville and Cairns and the other larger centres many men who under ordinary conditions would have been content to work, and to do their work well, were encouraged by the present Government to strike, much to their detriment. And the money that had to be spent on account of unemployment very largely had to be spent in those centres. And yet in this Statement the Treasurer dodges that fact. He puts in something else, and hopes to avoid the larger and more important things. Until this country wakes up to the fact that one of the things that should prevail is not encouraging people to get out of employment, or to do things which would drive men out of employment, unemployment will continue. The encouragement of employment is one of those factors which are going to help towards the prosperity of the community and the lowering of the cost of living, and until we wake up to those facts it will be disastrous to the country. I say that when Ministers of the Crown—and I am glad that the Home Secretary is in his place

—deliberately and off their own bat practically encourage men to strike and get out of employment, when they back up the lawless side of the community, I say it is disastrous to the community. And that is also one of the factors which the Treasurer omitted from his Statement with regard to the unemployment which is existing in Queensland, more particularly so far as the Northern cities and towns are concerned. The Treasurer has been there, and he knows it. He knows that some of those people have been themselves "walloping their own joss," because to some extent he has had to put his foot down and say, "I can go no farther."

MR. COLLINS: Are you sure that some of those people were not paid by your side?

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the hon. member thinks that this side descend to those methods, to which probably the hon. member himself descends, he is altogether wrong. Let me come to the position into which the country has got as a result of the actions of the Home Secretary and others. The Auditor-General says that in the financial year 1917-18 a sum of £9,152 18s. 10d. was required for relief, whereas during 1918-19 the amount expended was £26,412 1s. 9d., or nearly three times the total for the previous year. He goes on further to say—

"From the 1st of February last the scale of rations allowed to the recipients was increased by over 40 per cent., but the main cause of the large expenditure was the regrettable fact that the industrial troubles of the last few months have placed such an increased number of families in the position of being dependent on Government aid."

And a little later he says—

"It will be readily recognised that distress must be rife when, for the month of June last, the State butchers' shops alone in the metropolitan area issued beef to the value of over £135 per week, and that for the three months—June, July, and August, 1919—the relief expenditure throughout the State was £12,820, whereas for the same three months in 1918 it totalled £2,111."

MR. RIORDAN: In 1914 they got no meat from your Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is absolutely untrue. I venture to say, from my position in the House to-day, that whatever the position may have been in 1914-15, it was absolutely better than the position to-day. Money went further then than it does now. Hon. members cannot get away from the facts which stare them in the face—that money as earned to-day does not upon the average bring in as much as did a lower rate in 1914-15.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: The sovereign is worth more in Queensland than in any other State.

MR. BERTRAM: That applies to every State in the Commonwealth.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Is not this supposed to be the model State? Is not this the State of which the ex-Premier went about and said, "Look, gentlemen, Queensland is the model State. Look at what

[4 p.m.] has been done there"? And, though it may be the model State in the view of some people in one sense, it is certainly the model State in the sense that it has a bigger taxation than any other State.

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It is a model in that particular regard, and it is a model in the direction of doing things which no other State has attempted to do. I shall refer to that later on. It is a model in doing things which bring the greatest discredit upon the community generally.

MR. KIRWAN: What about your friends next door in connection with the wheat pool scandal?

HON. W. H. BARNES: My friend over there has a pretty loud voice, and that is about the extent of him.

MR. COLLINS: What about the Charleville riots?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows more about riots than I do. The position in Queensland to-day is made what it is by the action of the Government. May I deal with the position which exists to-day in Queensland in other directions? I want to ask, dealing with the Financial Statement, if Queensland is the model State in connection with employment? The Treasurer knows that his life is being worried out of him by men coming along and seeking work, and he gives very fine promises, and that is about the extent of it.

MR. CARTER: There is not as much unemployment here as there is in the other States of the Commonwealth.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Unemployment is rife in Queensland to-day. The instrument which the Treasurer and his friends have created is an instrument which is reacting against them.

MR. CARTER: An instrument created by your party for political purposes.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is an old stock cry, and the hon. member for Port Curtis knows that it is not true. If the party on this side had been in power, we would, at any rate, have gone along lines which were legitimate and businesslike, but hon. members opposite have not done that.

I want to deal with the Treasurer's remarks on page 6 of the Statement with regard to Trust Funds. I said that the Statement was very full of padding, and I am going to show that. The statement made by the Treasurer was something like this. He said, dealing with Trust Funds, that the debit balance on 30th June, 1918, was £657,037. Then he went on to say that, happily—I may not be using the exact words he used in his statement—happily the position had been improved, but very largely it was a book improvement. I say that that was a deliberate—I will not say an intentional—misstatement. (Government laughter.) I say it was deliberately made, at any rate, to deceive the House. The Treasurer's Statement with regard to Trust Funds is ingenious. The amount in connection with State enterprises referred to by him, which was transferred, was £534,738. If you add to that, £188,258, the debit balance, it makes a total of £722,996. The Committee will observe that, whilst on 30th June the debit was £657,037, by adding those two sums together the total is £722,996 for the year ending 1919. Yet, somehow or other—I presume it was probably a lapse of memory—something happened by which the Treasurer failed to draw our attention to the fact that the amount was really larger than it was during the previous year; that is, by adding the amount transferred and the amount revealed in the Statement.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

Then, what is the position of the Loan Fund? The figures show that the Loan Account at the end of June, 1919, was £500,000 worse off than on 30th June, 1918, the position being that on 30th June, 1918, there was a credit of £1,919,434, and on 30th June, 1919, of £1,398,389. As a matter of fact, the position had gone from bad to worse to the extent of £500,000. Then, this afternoon, in answer to a question which I put to the Treasurer yesterday, further information was revealed showing the state of the Loan Account on 31st December last. I believe I have noted the figures correctly. I asked, "What amount of money was standing to credit of the Loan Account on 31st December last," and the answer of the Treasurer was, £701,826. I want to point out how perilously near we were getting to an extreme position, because, if we take up the monthly statements made from time to time, we find that, on some occasions, as much as £400,000 has been spent in one month on Loan Account. It will be seen that we were getting close to a dangerous position in the State.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You were much lower in 1911.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of speaking on the matter. Reference has been made to the State iron and steel works. It is something like a bunch of carrots which is being held out to different constituencies at this particular juncture. There is a general scramble apparently, and various members are hoping that they will be able to tell their constituents that they have induced the Government to place the iron and steel works in their constituency.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Is the iron and steel works like a bunch of carrots?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is not very much like a bunch of carrots. Might I also draw attention to the sugar position? No one who reads the paragraph on page 12 in the Financial Statement with reference to the matter could ever imagine a more involved paragraph. Talk about a George Reid-er! It is a George Reid-er, with all due deference to a brilliant statesman who has passed away. The paragraph reads—

"Recognising that the conditions are such that the producers are entitled to an increased price for their product, the Government are negotiating with the Commonwealth authorities with the object of securing an increased price for raw sugar. Without any desire to impose on the consumer, and disclaiming any wish for present world's parity—provided we receive due recognition when or if the world's prices decline—this Government stand for increased production, and to make Australia self-supporting—and an increased price and a stabilised sugar policy are vital factors in this connection—as well as for the permanent settlement of a white population along our northern coastal belt."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear! hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: What does it really mean? Talk about a "Yes-No" paragraph! It says on the one hand, "We want cheaper sugar," and it says on the other hand, "Yes, but we do not want cheaper sugar."

THE PREMIER: Where does it say we want cheaper sugar?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The inference is there, as the hon. gentleman knows. Then he gets in another little bit of electioneering, with regard to white Australia.

MR. CARTER: That would hurt your party.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to say that this party are out for a white Australia.

MR. COLLINS: When you advocated conscription you were out for a black Australia.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Hon. members who represent Northern constituencies know that there are coming into North Queensland a large number of aliens who, by reason of the frequent strikes in the industry, are driving out our own people from that particular part.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What aliens are coming in?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Who is responsible? The hon. gentleman who is interjecting is responsible for their coming in. He is a member of a Government which is in power to deal with this matter. If they think it is wrong, why do they not tackle it? Has their voice been raised in protest? If it has been raised in protest, it has been kept very quiet. I do not know that it has been raised in protest at all. It seems to me that they have quietly winked at the position.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Do you call the Italian an alien?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not call the Italian an alien, but I know there are other aliens there, and the hon. gentleman knows it too, and he knows that they are working South.

THE HOME SECRETARY: And you gave them permits to work in the industry.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman shifts his ground. May I say one thing in connection with the Japanese? When the Government came into office, what transpired? The ex-Premier said, "We are going to 'out' these people"; and what happened?

THE HOME SECRETARY: When did he say that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He said it to the public Press, and I take the opportunity of saying that if the ex-Premier had read the correspondence in the Chief Secretary's office he would not have made the statement. What happened afterwards? Is it not an open secret that in connection with some of the Northern districts the ex-Premier did not explain what he said. Instructions were given to go ahead and allow Japanese to be employed, and it was given up because they might find trouble. I am going to give the Treasurer an opportunity of mentioning this matter when he replies. He knows that the Japanese consul was very active in this particular matter, and I challenge him to deny it.

THE PREMIER: The Hughes Government were particularly active.

THE HOME SECRETARY: What are you trying to prove?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am trying to prove that this Government have practically winked at some of those things which to-day are driving out our own people to the detriment of the country. I am not referring to the Japanese now. I remember that not very long ago there was a ship down here at Brown's Wharf which had a number of coloured men on board, and they were called

brothers by hon. members opposite, and taken up to the Trades Hall by friends of hon. members opposite.

THE HOME SECRETARY: Your policy of a white Australia is a bit mixed all right. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer refers, on page 15 of the Statement, to a diminution of revenue brought about by various causes. I want to amplify those causes. It is all very well for the Treasurer to attribute it to the drought. I admit that the drought has been rampant. No one can say that drought has not been rampant in Queensland.

MR. CARTER: Some of your members say there has been no drought.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I say there has been drought, and I am responsible for my own statement, but the financial trouble has been brought about by bad Government. It is brought about by want of confidence. The Treasurer may laugh; but there is a growing want of confidence in the mind of the community to-day—and I hope the Treasurer will wake up to the fact—a want of confidence which has been revealed by his own anticipations for the coming year in regard to income tax, which I shall refer to later on. There is a want of confidence because the people realise that this is the heaviest-taxed State in the Commonwealth. They also realise this fact: that, whilst in 1914-1915 the amount received from direct taxation was £974,000, last year direct taxation produced £2,772,000. What is happening to-day? The Treasurer's own figures show that he is expecting £2,400,000 from direct taxation, which is a falling off of £300,000 as compared with the previous year. On top of that, he is going to put another plaster of £590,000 from direct taxation. If there ever was a Government which should take credit to itself for having squeezed and squeezed the taxpayers of the State, then it is the Government sitting on the other side that should do so. I want to ask where is it all going to end? When is all this particular business going to end?

MR. MORGAN: They are only commencing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This sort of business is going to be disastrous to Queensland. Does the Treasurer think that he can keep squeezing the people at every turn, and yet expect them to have any confidence in the community? How can they have any confidence in the community with a Government like we have at the present time—a Government that delights in doing these things; a Government that delights in dragging taxation out of the community generally? How can the people have confidence in a Government like that? The result will be that people will be turning their attention in other directions.

MR. PAYNE: Will you tell us what you would do under the circumstances?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would deal with the problem on business lines, such as they were dealt with before this Government came into office. (Government laughter.)

MR. CARTER: Retrenchment.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Poll tax.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, I would not go in for retrenchment, but I would see that if a position was required for one man that only one man was put into that position. There should be a reorganisation and a gradual

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adjustment of things. The Treasurer must know what is going on in the Government departments to-day. If he does not know, I would like him to send someone round, or go round the departments himself, and see what is going on. I am not referring to the officers employed in the Treasury Department, or in the Treasury Building, and I am not referring to the officers in the Executive Building; but, if the Treasurer goes round, he will find that there are men employed by the Government at the present time when there is no need for their employment at all. That is one of the reasons for the position we are in to-day, and why increased taxation is necessary.

The PREMIER: What are the places you refer to?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Well, the Railway Department, for instance. The hon. gentleman knows that the Railway Department has been a dumping ground for every friend of the Government that comes along.

The PREMIER: You are reflecting on the railway men.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not referring to the men connected with the permanent staff at all. I am referring to the men who have been sent there as casuals. It is merely a dumping ground to make the way easier for Ministers of the Crown.

The PREMIER: That is too trivial.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I notice in the Statement that the question of repudiation comes in again. In referring to this matter, I know that I shall be charged with trying to protect the squatter. I do not know the squatter.

Mr. CARTER: He knows you, though. (Government laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: If he knows me, then all I can say is that he knows a jolly good man. (Laughter.)

Mr. F. A. COOPER: A jolly good man for the squatter.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: We know the kinship between you and the squatter.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What is the position? The Government have come along and stated that they have failed in the past to get certain legislation through in the direction of asking us to repudiate agreements which have been made. They now come along and say we are going to get a certain sum of money in that particular direction. The Government are going in for repudiation. When the Government want to do any repudiating, they do not hesitate to do an improper thing. There is a right way and a just way to do these things. It is a wrong thing altogether to come along and hold a pistol at the heads of these people, and say that certain things are going to be done. That is what is going to be done by the Government, because it is mentioned in the Treasurer's Statement.

Mr. PAYNE: Do you think it will drive those people off the land?

Mr. STOPFORD: You repealed many awards when you were Secretary for Public Works yourself.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is a misstatement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Yes, you did. I remember it well.

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Mr. STOPFORD: You repealed the award which was given in connection with the Rockhampton carters.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That is quite true.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister is getting excited.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: I know what a twister you were in 1912, anyway.

HON. W. H. BARNES: My time is limited. References are made in the Statement to the Railway Department, and I notice a special pleading paragraph there. First of all, it says that the Government did raise the rates previously to a very small extent. It was denied that the Government raised the rates at all, as a matter of fact. Then it goes on and says that the Government were going to raise the freights and fares to a small extent. The Secretary for Railways is here, and I would like to draw his attention to a paragraph which appeared in the paper just on the eve of the Federal elections, when he said that the freights and fares were not going to be raised. At least, he was reported to have said that. I saw the statement in his own paper, the "Daily Standard"; and surely the "Daily Standard" would not make any mistake. Yesterday afternoon we were face to face with this position—the Treasurer had the effrontery to tell the leader of the Opposition that if he wanted to get any information he must get it out of the columns of the paper.

Mr. MORGAN: The House was ignored altogether.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yesterday afternoon an hon. member held up a copy of the "Daily Standard," showing a picture of the new Lieutenant-Governor, Mr. Lennon. It appeared in yesterday afternoon's "Daily Standard." So, if the Treasurer says the information is correct in one instance when it appears in that paper, we can look on it as being correct when it states that the Secretary for Railways stated there would be no increase in fares and freights on the railways. We know what really happened. The matter was carefully kept back until after the election was over; and now we know that the fares and freights have been increased.

Mr. POLLOCK: The "Daily Standard" has published some truthful things about you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And probably the "Standard" has published some untruthful things about the hon. member. However, that does not matter at all. I notice there is a statement in the paper where the Minister says that the charges on the railways are about the lowest in the world. I remember when the Minister for Railways said certain things about the nation to which we belong, when he referred to it as "the home of cant, humbug, and hypocrisy." He had a loyal partner with him on that occasion. I shall have something to say about that later on.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Don't reflect on Royalty.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer in his statement refers to the exercise of rigid economy. Did you ever hear of such a thing? Is it possible for a Government like this one to practise rigid economy? Look at the multitude of motor-cars they have got, and say whether that is rigid economy?

Mr. CARTER: Yes; they save a lot of valuable time.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is not economy at all. We know that economy is essential in the Government administration, but we do not get economy.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Treasurer uses the same motor-car that you had.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Government are incapable of practising economy, and even if they wanted to practise it, the power behind them would put the whip over them and see that they did not practise it.

MR. COLLINS: We do not practise it on the teachers or the railway men.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There is another significant thing in connection with the Statement. The Treasurer drew attention to the fact that there was an increased expenditure in this department, that department, and the other department, and he drew attention to the fact that there was going to be increased expenditure so far as public works were concerned.

THE PREMIER: Quote from the Statement and see what I did say.

MR. PAYNE: Quote the headings.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will quote the headings to the hon. gentleman, but I want to deal with another factor in connection with the proposed taxation.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the Upper House?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Upper House will be made very easy now. There is no question about the Upper House now. The hon. gentleman knows all about the Upper House now. (Government laughter.)

MR. O'SULLIVAN: Don't cry. (Laughter.)

MR. CARTER: Don't get downhearted.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Before I sit down I shall have something to say about that. I regret very much to think that the Government have descended to the things they have. The Treasurer suggested that there was likely to be a shortage of £1,098,000 this year, and he proposes to bridge that by increasing the income tax to return an extra £500,000, and he also proposes to get £250,000 from the increased fares and freights on the railways, and £258,000 from increased rent brought about by an amendment of the Land Act, to which I have already referred. That will make a total of £1,098,000 to make up the deficiency. That is going to be a plaster added on to the community. I want to draw the attention of the Committee to this fact—that during the last four or five years there has been increased taxation, and, as a consequence, there has been an increased revenue. The increase has, as a matter of fact, nearly all come from increased taxation. It has not come from developmental work. It is taxation that has been placed on the people, and the money has come out of the pockets of the people.

MR. O'SULLIVAN: How about State insurance?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of saying something about State insurance later on. So far as this taxation is concerned, the Treasurer is carrying out the policy of the ex-Premier. I can remember the ex-Premier, when he was sitting on the opposite side of the House, stating that his policy was to get as much out of the people as he possibly could.

MR. CARTER: When did he say that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The ex-Premier's mantle has fallen well on the shoulders of the present Premier. I would like to know when this taxation is going to stop.

MR. STOPFORD: When we do justice to the people you sweated for fifty years.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Premier must learn that if he continues to bring about more taxation then the people will rise up and say that there are too many Parliaments in Australia and they will go in for unification.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: That is what the Government wants.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The effect will be to create in the minds of the people a demand to have less Parliaments, and they will go in for unification. Personally, I am not in favour of unification, because I know that Queensland would suffer more than any other State as a result of unification.

MR. CARTER: You know what will happen next election.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes. The hon. gentleman will lose the number of his mess next election. (Laughter.)

THE PREMIER: This is what you said in 1918.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes, and I am repeating it in 1920. Have you ever seen a party where the leading members have tried to get out as quickly as they could, as is noticed in the Government party? They are getting out and filling one billet after another, because they can see

[4.30 p.m.] "the writing on the wall,"

and they know what is coming.

Might I ask what the Treasurer said in connection with finance? May I read from that famous circular which he—in conjunction with his colleague, the Minister for Railways—issued? He said—

"Finance is the basis of government.

It is also the test of government. Apply it to the financial records of the two parties who are now before you."

And then he said—

"Do you know that from 1900 to 1914 the deficits amounted to £1,163,893 and the surplus £714,623—that is, in fourteen years an accumulated deficit of £449,270."

I want to tackle the Treasurer upon his own statement at that particular time, and to ask if in all those years an accumulated deficit of £449,000 was an evidence of bad Government, is it not further evidence of bad Government when in four years there is an accumulated deficit by a Labour Government of £875,000. I want to ask him whether the words uttered by himself and his colleague on that occasion were true? If they were true, then does not this Government to-day stand condemned as a result of his financing? I say it stands condemned absolutely as a result of his financing.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: There have been four years of war.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Four years of war is no excuse. Then the Treasurer and Mr. Fihelly further said—

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

Turn up the Auditor-General's report, page 20. He says, "Our loan indebtedness now is over £65,000,000." This precious Government,

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who, through its leaders, laid these principles down before a general election, are now impaled upon their own statements. I previously stated that while the direct taxation in 1914-1915 from all sources was £954,000 odd, in 1918 it realised £2,272,269. I have already drawn attention to the fact that the anticipated revenue from taxation this year would be £2,405,000, plus £590,000 additional taxation. Look at the difference in the position to-day between 1914-1915 and the anticipated position of 1919-1920. In 1914-1915 the direct taxation was £945,000 and, assuming that these taxation proposals go through and are realised, about £3,000,000 in 1919-1920. Every thoughtful person should stop and think and ask where are we going with this heavy load that is being put upon us. We cannot plead that it is the outcome of war. If the Federal Government imposed additional burdens they can say we have to make up for our expenditure in connection with the war, but this Government cannot say that. With one or two notable exceptions, they tried in every turn to dodge everything which would help at that juncture. It seems to me that this Financial Statement is deliberately introduced for the purpose of increasing taxation and to cover the Government's inability to manage—they have failed absolutely to manage the affairs of this State, and these financial proposals are going to give them carte blanche in the direction of expenditure, to make them feel that they can go on placating and placating—it does not matter where principle comes in—those who come and ask for assistance. There is an absence of constructive policy in connection with the Statement—a direct absence of anything that would indicate that the great minds of the Cabinet—if they are there—have risen to deal with something of a constructive nature so necessary in connection with the affairs of Queensland. The Statement speaks about drought. There has been a drought, it is true, but there is also a drought of constructive ability. Have not new conditions arisen all over the world, and in Queensland too. We hear a great deal about the high cost of living and the profiteer. If there is a profiteer, Mr. Chairman, I say get at him. I am not here to protect him.

The high prices of many lines have been brought about through drought, but there have also been other disturbing influences. Are not some of the high prices existing to-day in Brisbane due to the strike? They are. Are not mothers having to pay extreme rates for many lines because the ordinary avenues of transit are not available to-day, and is that not one of the reasons why we find ourselves in the position in which we are to-day? As I have said before, there is only one remedy, and that is that we should produce and produce, and that is patent to anyone who looks at the able-bodied men all over the world who have been taken away from their ordinary avocations during the war. Should there not be some effort made in Queensland to assist and encourage the man who is doing his bit on the land, and to get others there. Unless we are very careful, before very long we are simply going to not only strangle them, as the hon. member for Murilla has said, but we are going to kill them altogether—drive them off the land; and the time is not far distant when, in the interests of this great State, and of the workers and of every business enterprise, we shall not only have to induce men to go on the land but shall have

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to assist them when there. What is happening to-day? There are shorter hours—I am not saying anything against that—in the various towns and cities, the effect of which is to draw the young life into the cities and towns. They say, "Why should we keep our noses to work early and late when we can do so much better in the cities and towns?" The effect is going to be disastrous upon the community generally.

MR. F. A. COOPER: Where do you work—in the city or country?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I work in the city, and I want to say that I have done a very great deal more work than the hon. member has done.

MR. F. A. COOPER: I think I can call you a non-producer.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This is the difference between some of the loud-mouthed men who come into this House; they know nothing about things, they prescribe for the other fellow, and, in many cases, have never done a decent day's work in their lives.

MR. F. A. COOPER: Why talk about yourself like that. (Government laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You know a fair bit about farming the farmer.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knows a great deal about farming somebody else.

THE CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: My time, I find, has nearly gone. I want to make another statement, for which I myself, and no one else, am entirely responsible. I have only my conscience to satisfy—nobody else's. In answer to a question which was raised by the leader of this party, it has been stated that certain things were going to happen in connection with this country: that a gentleman—in many respects a most estimable gentleman; I say nothing against that—is to be appointed to the position of Lieutenant-Governor of the State—that is, if the paper statement is correct. What is the position? Realising the responsibility of the position I am in—and I am speaking entirely for myself—I say most emphatically that that appointment is an insult to the loyal people of this great State of Queensland.

THE PREMIER: That Commission was signed by the King, and you are reflecting on the King.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The King would not be in possession of all the facts. Here is a gentleman appointed Lieutenant-Governor who at a certain gathering endorsed the most disloyal remarks that have ever been made by a Cabinet Minister in this State, and yet he is thrown upon this State on the recommendation of that Government.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: His sons fought in defence of the Empire while yours stayed at home.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Do I understand the hon. member to have said that an hon. member of this Chamber made certain disloyal statements. If so, I must point out that it is quite unparliamentary.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I recognise, Mr. Chairman, the responsibility of what I am doing. I repeat that the hon. the Lieutenant-Governor made and endorsed certain disloyal statements—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I recognise the position I am in, and I say he made disloyal statements.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The PREMIER: Mr. Chairman, I rise to a point of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I have already pointed out to the hon. member that he is quite out of order in making charges of disloyalty against any hon. member of this Chamber. He has repeated those charges and I now call upon him to unreservedly withdraw.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I say, Mr. Smith—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member withdraw?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I have said it and I repeat it. (Cries of Order! Order! and uproar.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am very sorry, Mr. Chairman. I have been connected with this House for many years and I regard it as an honour. I have said that a certain member of this House made disloyal statements and I refuse absolutely to withdraw. (Renewed disorder.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already pointed out to the hon. member that he is quite out of order to pass any reflection on the loyalty of any hon. member of this Chamber. I now, for the last time, ask him to withdraw that statement.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I positively refuse. The hon. gentleman is outside the Chamber now—the Hon. William Lennon.

MR. MORGAN: The remarks were not made inside Parliament. They were made outside.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. member withdraw?

HON. W. H. BARNES rising,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under Standing Order 122—

The PREMIER: Give him an opportunity of withdrawing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Perhaps, if I amplified what I have to say by reading the direct statement—

The PREMIER: Withdraw the statement.

MR. PAYNE: None of your "Kidston being drummed out of Falkirk" here.

HON. W. H. BARNES: With your permission, Mr. Smith, I will read the direct statement. I do not say that any member of this House—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Do I understand that the hon. member unreservedly refuses to withdraw, and persists in disregarding the authority of the Chair.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Certainly.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: In that case there is no other course for me to pursue than under Standing Order No. 122 to name the Hon. W. H. Barnes, member for

Bulimba, to the House for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

The Deputy Speaker having been called, the TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported the Hon. W. H. Barnes for disregarding the authority of the Chair.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Temporary Chairman reports the Hon. W. H. Barnes for disobedience to the Chair.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Poor Willie!

The PREMIER: It would not be too late even yet for the hon. member to withdraw.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: What has he got to withdraw?

The PREMIER: It is perfectly obvious that if the statement was made by the hon. member it is a reflection on a member of this Chamber. It is very unpleasant, and surely unnecessary, to apply the drastic provisions of the Standing Order. I think that the hon. member might, in deference to the Chair, withdraw. The hon. member indicates that he does not intend to do so. In that case it is evident that it is deliberate and persistent defiance of the Chair, and I have no other course than to move—

"That the hon. member be suspended from the Chamber for the remainder of this week."

MR. MORGAN: Tyranny of the worst description!

MR. SIZER: A nice way to start the new year!

MR. MORGAN: Talk about freedom of speech!

MR. F. A. COOPER: Freedom of blackguards!

Question—That the Hon. W. H. Barnes be suspended from the services of the House for the remainder of the week (*Mr. Theodore's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barber	Mr. McCormack
" Brennan	" McLachlan
" Carter	" Mullan
" Collins	" O'Sullivan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Payne
" Cooper, W.	" Pollock
" Coyne	" Riordan
" Dunstan	" Ryan, D.
" Fihelly	" Ryan, H. J.
" Foley, T. A.	" Smith
" Forde	" Stopford
" Gilday	" Theodore
" Gillies	" Thompson
" Gledson	" Weir
" Kirwan	" Whitford
" Larcombe	" Wilson
" Lloyd	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Kirwan and Mr. Weir.

NOES, 23.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Moore
" Barnes, G. P.	" Morgan
" Bayley	" Petrie
" Bebbington	" Roberts
" Bell	" Sizer
" Corser	" Somerset
" Elphinstone	" Spencer
" Fry	" Swayne
" Grayson	" Taylor
" Gunn	" Vowles
" Hodge	" Walker
" Macartney	

Tellers: Mr. Moore and Mr. Spencer.

Resolved in the affirmative.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Shame! Shame! Shame!

MR. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I am sure we must very much regret this unfortunate

Mr. Elphinstone.]

beginning of the new year's operations, and I sincerely hope that the Government will not be so—shall I say, vindictive—on account of their defeat at the last elections that they will allow their feelings to influence them to suppress reasonable criticism from this side of the House.

I very much regret that the Standing Orders prevent the adoption by this House of the proposal made by the hon. member for Toombul—that is, that a letter or telegram of congratulation be sent to Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister of Australia—that Australia should be congratulated on having avoided the disease which is attacking Queensland at the present moment. Euclid has provided a very excellent axiom which furnishes us with a very apposite and comforting reflection for the present moment—that the whole is greater than the part, and so long as the Commonwealth, which is the whole, is represented by Nationalism, then Queensland, which is the part, can suffer as it is to-day without Australia's being assailed by the menace which otherwise would overcome her. (Government interjections.)

I want to deal largely in my remarks with the Financial Statement, as it is the Financial Statement we have before us, and I do not intend to transgress at all, but to confine my remarks to the criticism for which it calls. It is, in my opinion, a most remarkable thing that the Treasurer, in his Statement, attributes the whole serious position disclosed by it to the returned soldiers, to floods, droughts, epidemics, and the war. These are the five colleagues which the Treasurer calls to his assistance to explain away the shocking state of affairs which his Budget Speech discloses. It is a remarkable thing that the Treasurer has said nothing about that small body of dictators who have been framing the policy of Queensland during the past five years; that small body, the Trades Hall executive, who have been responsible for bringing Queensland into the position in which we find her to-day: that small executive which has caused the deputy leader of the Federal Labour party to publicly protest. And when the deputy leader of a party, who is bound by solemn pledges such as the caucus party is, breaks faith with his bond and makes a public complaint of the position which is found in Queensland and Australia, we know quite well he must have had good grounds for taking the action which he does. During the past two or three years of debate in this House we have continually pointed out that this Government or the Labour party which is occupying the Government benches are merely the tools of that body of dictators who have driven Queensland to the position of stress in which she finds herself to-day. And now we find ample evidence from the lips of the deputy leader of the Federal Labour party that that is actually so. The Treasurer, in his Statement, makes no reference to that dictatorship, which probably is interfering with his saner judgment. He makes no reference to those influences and forces which have been driving him and his party into the dregs of despair in which they are at the present moment. He attributes the position of Queensland to causes which are outside the control of any Government. He says nothing also about the perpetual war on employers, the perpetual war on those with capital—a war which has had the effect of curtailing industry and expansion. When expansion is needed, when the development of our

resources is an essential to our welfare, he fails to point out that his and his party's onslaught on the employer and persons with capital has had the effect of keeping capital away from Queensland that would have come here, and of causing the employer to close down where he otherwise would have expanded.

He further makes no reference to the burdensome effect of taxation—the penalising of thrift. He says nothing about the detrimental effect that has had upon the ordinary expansion which we should look [5 p.m.] for in the State, and the effect it has had upon the financial resources of the State. He makes no reference to the various strikes and unrest which have been interfering with industry and development in all parts of the State. He makes no reference to the effect that it has had upon the cost of living in Queensland. All these things he quietly passes over, because these bad effects are produced by his followers—those to whom he looks to keep him in office. He makes no reference to the "go-slow" policy which we have evidence of in North Queensland at the present moment, to the shipping hold-up, and the embargo placed on the port of Townsville because of this perpetual "go-slow" movement, which must of necessity retard progress and affect the financial standing of the State. This is quietly passed over. He makes no reference to the flouting of the Arbitration Court and the substitution of direct action. He makes no reference to the fact that his own Government have assisted in that flouting of the Arbitration Court, with the result that no employer feels secure or safe in his present position, and, therefore, the ordinary natural expansion and development of the State are retarded on that account. He makes no reference to the overstaffing and consequent inefficiency of the railways and other public departments, which he knows quite well has been responsible for one of the biggest deficits that this State has had to face. He makes no reference, further, to the distress and unemployment which are prevailing as the consequence of these very reasons which he quietly passes over. A Premier and Treasurer who claims to lead and direct a State with the potentialities of Queensland, and who quietly and absolutely ignores these outstanding reasons is, in my opinion, deficient in an appreciation of his responsibility.

Last year's operations, according to the Financial Statement, showed a deficit of £171,988, but we must also take into account the £313,000 which was to have been collected for the purpose of meeting the past year's deficiencies. Therefore, to get a true idea of what the financial position of the State was at the close of the last financial year we have to take into consideration the fact that the total deficit was £485,000. That puts a very different complexion on matters. The Treasurer juggles with the position by saying that the retrospective money was only intended to apply towards liquidating the deficit of the previous year if the ordinary revenue received for the then current year was sufficient to meet that year's expenditure. Of course, that is true as far as it goes, but it is merely juggling with the situation, because the truth is that last year's operations disclose a deficiency of approximately half a million of money, which shows a shocking and disgraceful state of affairs

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when one takes into consideration the large amount of additional revenue which he had at his disposal. Another thing we see no mention made of is the accumulated deficit of £581,000, which is an overdraft at the Queensland National Bank at the present moment. That, I suppose, is another gift which will be passed on to posterity as a kind remembrance of misgovernment by the Labour Government that Queensland is suffering from at the present time.

The PREMIER: What do you say about the overdraft at the Queensland National Bank?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You will see what I said; my time is limited. I have said exactly what is in the Auditor-General's report. The Treasurer said nothing further regarding the suspension of the Sinking Fund. There was a time when Queensland's legislators and Treasurers appreciated the fact that debts when incurred had to be paid off some time, and that the only reasonable way of doing so was by creating a sinking fund, which could be used to meet our obligations when the time arrived. Further additions to the sinking fund have been abandoned.

The PREMIER: It still exists.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: But it is not added to, and we are rapidly approaching a time when we will have to redeem millions of money, and we have very little sinking fund with which to meet the situation. Considerable time is given and a lot of space devoted to the success of the loan on the London market. In my judgment, the credit of the successful flotation of that loan is due to Queensland's soldiers, and not Queensland's legislators.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Queensland and the rest of Australia are enjoying such glory and distinction throughout the world that London and its financiers are so impressed with the situation and with what the soldiers of Australia have done that, out of pure gratitude, if for no other reason, they came forward in their thousands and subscribed to the assistance of those who have acted so nobly. But to think that Queensland legislators have impressed the home investors to the extent of causing a loan to be over-subscribed is simply allowing ourselves to dwell in a fool's paradise.

Mr. KIRWAN: What did the city editor of the "Times" say?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I can only understand references to the "Age" coming from the hon. member. Another point is this—that, if this loan has been so successful as has been described, it is quite obvious that the financial advisers of the Government were too generous in offering the terms they did. It shows the rate of interest is too high, and the price at which the loan is issued too low, and there is little congratulation to be derived from the fact that the loan was so liberally subscribed, on the score of finance, because in my judgment it shows the terms are too generous, and Queensland taxpayers ought to have been saved from some of the burden which will be imposed upon them. In my opinion, London financiers who have been following the situation still have unbounded faith in the power, common sense, and honesty of the Legislative Council. They know quite well that any of those repudiatory Bills which are proposed to be introduced will meet their just doom in

the other House, unless we see in the action which has been consummated during the last two or three days the deathknell of the other House. Another thing which was a matter of comfort and encouragement to the financial world of London was that this Government is about to die, and nothing is surer than that. Hon. members opposite may smile. When I first came into this House, if a reference to the death of this Labour Government was mentioned, I used to think that we had no cause to think of such a thing. We find that Queensland generally is discredited from end to end, and so London is looking forward, like everyone else who loves Queensland and looks for its expansion, to the early death and demise of this Government, and that is probably one of the things which caused the London financiers to subscribe to the loan to the extent they did. (Government laughter.) Nothing is said about the additional £130,000 taxation which this loan is going to impose on the taxpayers of Queensland. At 6½ per cent. it means that we approximately have to find £130,000 a year to meet the interest on the loan.

No reference is made to the heavy debts which fall due for renewal in the course of the next two or three years. I understood the Treasurer to say in previous debates that he had this prominently in mind, but I see no indication of this in the Financial Statement before us. He probably knows that, when these loans fall due for renewal in 1921 or 1922, he will not be here in any official capacity where he is called upon to put his words into action.

I want to refer for a few minutes to the question of revenue as applied to taxation in particular. Last year we derived from taxation £2,722,000, and it is significant that the Treasurer finds occasion to reduce his Estimates for the coming year, on the same basis of taxation, to £2,405,000. It is evident that he had the last six months financial figures before him, because we can see by them that there is a considerable shrinkage in the income from taxation during the first six months of this financial year of about £109,000. It is very significant that the income which we derive from taxation is showing such a severe shrinkage, and a Treasurer who knew his business and could see the signs of the times would know that that shrinkage in taxation shows that the expansion and development of the country is being retarded, and that something should be done to give confidence to push things ahead. Another thing, it shows that those whose shoulders have borne this burden of taxation have to face a further burden of £590,000, making the total revenue derived from taxation no less than £3,000,000 in a little community like this. We were the most heavily taxed State before this Budget was introduced, but what we are going to be now heaven only knows, and what the effect is going to be it is difficult to imagine.

It is well to note the increase of taxation. The amount per head in 1915 was £1 8s. 2d.; in 1916, £2 2s. 9d. per head; in 1917, £2 6s. 9d.; in 1918, £2 12s. 7d.; and in 1919, £4 7s.; and now, in 1920, it amounts to over £5 per head. What a wonderful record! Let us look at the expenditure side of the question. We find that the Treasurer estimates an increase of £830,000 in expenditure. It is significant that the increase in expenditure for the last six months only is £647,000, so it is quite evident that the Treasurer in calculating his £830,000 increase in expenditure

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for the year is very much below the mark, because for the six months up to 31st December last the increase in expenditure, as disclosed by the table, is no less than £647,000. We again see that the Land Act Repudiation Bill is to be introduced, and is to find a revenue of £258,000. Evidently the Government is emboldened by the success of the London loan to reintroduce this repudiatory legislation, and finds itself in the position of being absolutely dependent on that £258,000 to meet its estimated expenditure for the coming year.

I want to deal briefly with the question of railways, which everyone must admit is the most distressing portion of the whole of this Government's conduct of affairs. It is sucking the lifeblood out of Queensland at the present moment, and it is being dealt with as a joke rather than as a business proposition which requires drastic treatment. We find that the loss on the railways is attributed by the Treasurer to the increased wages and the costs of stores. That is a very plausible but very weak reason or excuse for explaining away the position. It is significant that no reference is made to a fact which was disclosed by means of a question during the last meeting of this House—that the earning power of each employee on the Queensland railways in 1914-1915 was £102. That earning power last year was reduced to £17.

The PREMIER: What nonsense! Take the gross earnings per head, and you will get it right.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am taking the net earnings per head, and it clearly shows that there is something in the form of stagnation in Queensland when railway earnings are reduced from £102 per head to £17 per head.

The PREMIER: You are simply trying to mislead the Committee.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: A comparative statement with regard to the working expenses of the States of Queensland, Victoria, and New South Wales may be interesting. In New South Wales the working expenses are 69 per cent., in Victoria 62 per cent., whereas in Queensland they are 92 per cent. of the income of the railways, disclosing a state of affairs which is deplorable, and it is remarkable that the Treasurer does not call some attention to the position, or point a finger to some method of redressing this terrible drain on the public resources of Queensland. A further point in connection with this matter shows that during the present year there are 4,692 more men employed in the Railway Department than were employed there in 1914-1915, although there were 1,400,000 less train miles run. That shows that the railways are hopelessly over-staffed at the present time. We know that the Minister for Railways is always putting on fresh men, and that the department has become the dumping ground for Queensland's unemployed. Instead of the railways being used for the natural expansion of the State, they have been an increasing expense to the public, simply because whenever there are any unemployed the Minister puts on every temperamentally fitted gentleman who presents himself for employment. The result of that policy is that there are nearly 5,000 more men employed and 1,500,000 less train miles run now than there were five years ago. The excuse has been given in connection with the position of the Railway Department that

there has been a great increase in the price of stores. This matter has been referred to by the Auditor-General in his report, and he shows the system which has prevailed and the waste of money which has been caused in connection with the purchase of stores for the Queensland Railway Department. We know that the Auditor-General referred to the purchase of 65 tons of carbide at £100 per ton landed in Brisbane when, at the same time, that carbide could have been purchased in Brisbane stores for £45 per ton.

The PREMIER: It was purchased by the Agent-General.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Then we know that sponge cloths were purchased at an estimated cost of £11,000, but they actually cost £30,000.

The PREMIER: They were purchased by the Agent-General.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You have only got to refer to the Auditor-General's report where he refers to the waste that is going on in the Railway Department. The Auditor-General recommends that some business man should be put on to assist the Commissioner for Railways so that business methods may be adopted in connection with the purchase of stores in the Railway Department.

The PREMIER: What about putting you on?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not seeking any jobs. I am not like hon. members opposite. The question of increasing the fares and freights is about to be undertaken by the Government. This is a question that should have been dealt with long ago. When the Estimates were before the House some fifteen months ago, I expressed the opinion that it was essential that the Government should raise the fares and freights. I pointed out that the railways were a business undertaking, and if the Government found that the fares and freights were not sufficient to meet their obligations they should raise them. But just at this particular moment let us remember that the Brisbane Tramways Company—the much persecuted Brisbane Tramways Company—has never raised its fares and freights during the term of the war, yet legislation was introduced here to cause that company to extend their sections and reduce their fares. While the Tramways Company were asked to do that, we were told that the cost of material had risen in the Railway Department and it became necessary to increase the rates and fares.

The PREMIER: How can you alter the fares and freights of the Tramways Company?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You make mistakes yourself. You are not the wonderful man you think you are. If anyone wants to study the position regarding the finances of the Railway Department at the present moment, he will see it disclosed in the Treasurer's Statement. The Treasurer looks for an increase of £140,000 from the railways by natural expansion. He also looks for an additional £250,000 by increasing the fares and freights during the current financial year. We can therefore look for £390,000 of additional revenue. I notice that the increased expenditure is estimated to amount to £255,000, so that the net result, if these Estimates and anticipations are realised, will be an increased revenue of £135,000 over last year. Seeing that the railways practically lost £1,435,000 last year, and seeing that we are only to get a net increase of £135,000 in

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the revenue this year, we can plainly see that we are going to have a further deficit presented to the Queensland taxpayers of something like £1,300,000 in connection with the railways. Yet we go blindly on year after year allowing the railways to suck the lifeblood out of Queensland without any attempt being made to face the position and control it in a businesslike way. At the present time we are borrowing money for which we have got to pay 6½ per cent. interest, and we invest that money in railways which earn 13s. 9d. per cent. How can that continue? That means that for every £100 we put into our railways it loses something like 5½ per cent., which the taxpayer has to make up.

In my judgment, railway expansion should be stopped in Queensland, except in regard to the three main lines which we all agree should be completed—namely, the North Coast line, the line to the Bowen coalfields, and the Winton to Longreach line. The talk of further railway expansion, when we know that every mile of railway last year lost £225 to this country, is sheer financial insanity. You must curtail the railway expenditure. You must cut out all this expenditure on railways which is hopelessly unprofitable and confine your attention towards developing those lands which lie along our railways at the present moment. If you do that you will make your railways profitable and payable, and that is much better than allowing them to drain all our resources. It is no use continuing the Public Works Commission inquiring into impossible propositions which are not likely to see the light of day for the next fifty years. I have already said in this House that so long as we are content to spend large sums of money upon railways which are unproductive, and, therefore, put large sums of money into circulation in that way, then the cost of our commodities will increase. Unless you invest money in the development of Queensland and in reproductive works, then it is obvious that the cost of living must increase. If you put more money into circulation by constructing railways you will be spending money in an unproductive way and getting nothing in return for it, and that will mean an increased cost of food and commodities. The Statement forshadowa a curtailment in connection with the public works policy. In my judgment, that is one of the most distressing signs of the present moment. To think that, when development is needed, we should curtail our public works expansion, it shows quite well that the Treasurer is losing faith in the necessity for expansion in this State. If the Treasurer confines his attention to such directions as are unprofitable and blindly shuts his eyes to those channels which would be profitable, then he cannot expect any change from the position as we find it in Queensland to-day. What is wanted in Queensland to-day is a sound, bold policy, and not spend all the money on railways and State enterprises. That is what has been crippling Queensland. What is wanted in Queensland is to go in for a bold policy of road construction, water conservation, and in other directions which would lead to a settlement of our waste lands and a greater productiveness of the soil. If we went in for a policy of that kind, it would provide freights and fares for our railways and help them to become paying propositions. Instead of them absorbing revenue, they would become revenue producing. I hope the Government will look for proper methods of

expansion, and look in the directions I have named. If they put all their efforts into operation in the direction of providing for conservation of water, and building main roads, they will go a long way towards making the railways pay, while, at the same time, they will provide better facilities for the primary producers. That is one of the great complaints of the man on the land to-day. The Government should concentrate their attention on certain specified areas and concentrate the population there and give them the facilities they want. The result would be that the railways would benefit and other channels of revenue would benefit. It is far better to concentrate on areas where there is a possibility of making them revenue producing, instead of building hundreds of miles of useless railways in all parts of Queensland and maintaining an expensive Royal Commission wandering over the face of Queensland taking evidence in the matter of railways which are not likely to be needed for the next fifty years to come. I am glad to see that caution is being exercised in connection with the proposed State iron and steel works. I am giving the Government credit for taking caution, as I presume they are carefully studying the position. It is a comfort to see that the Government are beginning to acquire that business acumen and conservatism which causes them to look before they leap, and that is something which they have not done in the past. It is consoling to see that the Premier, before setting out on that industry, is inquiring into the different sites, and examining the possibilities of deposits before taking any further steps in that direction. I would be only too pleased to wipe off all the expenditure that has already been incurred in connection with the proposed establishment of those works and let it be a dead loss rather than see the Government opening up iron and steel works in a district that is unsuitable, and then find afterwards that it is going to be a further "white elephant" and a further drag on the resources of Queensland, as many of the State enterprises are at the present time.

MR. MORGAN: Like the Warra coalmine.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: I am sorry that agriculture is not going to receive that attention which, in my judgment, it sorely needs. When we agree that the whole of the future of Queensland depends upon the primary producer, I am sorry that we are not extending our Agricultural Department in such a way that it will give the primary producer the necessary scientific knowledge and instruction that he needs. Instead of that, we come forward, year after year, with a stationary vote, and do nothing towards assisting the primary producer. In all the other countries of the world, the primary producer is helped in every possible way, and we should do the same. With regard to the sugar industry I see that the Treasurer refers to the fact that he is making attempts to have the price of sugar increased. I am not going to deal with that phase of the question. The Treasurer makes no mention in the Statement of the great interruption which has been caused to the sugar industry by the perpetual strikes which have taken place. He has made no reference to the fact that the producers of sugar have had their operations interfered with from time to time, contrary to the awards of the Arbitration Court. The Treasurer has made no reference to the fires which take place

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in the sugar fields, the causes of which are well known to all of us. The Treasurer has closed his eyes to the fact that in North Queensland the Italians are gradually pushing the Australian out. According to the statistics of the sugar industry, there are no less than 427 Italian growers occupying 20,500 acres of sugar land, representing from 16 to 18 per cent. of our sugar-growing areas in the hands of Italians. Every year it is increasing.

The PREMIER: Are not Italians good citizens?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Undoubtedly. But the native Australian is looking for expansion in the sugar industry here; but, owing to the continual interference he is receiving at the hands of these executives and coteries up North, he is being pushed out of it. He is interfered with by the gentlemen to whom the Premier appealed with tears in his eyes during the election, and told them to be good boys. These are the men who are dragging the sugar industry in the gutter.

The PREMIER: What has that got to do with the Italians?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Italians are absorbing the sugar industry from the productive point of view, and the ordinary Australian is being pushed out. Surely we do not want to see the sugar industry pass into the hands of the Italian altogether. If you do, then I do not. That is a system which the present Government is largely responsible for. The Premier talks in a highminded way about his interest in the sugar-grower and his interest about getting an increased price for sugar; but give the grower a certainty of labour, let him know that his cane will be cut, and let him know that when it is cut it will be carried to the mills and that it will be crushed there. If you can assure the sugar-grower of this, then he will be quite satisfied with the price he is getting at the present moment. Reference is made

to the mining industry, and here

[5.30 p.m.] again it is put down to the war.

The whole trend of the Financial Statement is that the cause of all these things is something which is outside the control of us here, that all the effects that Queensland is suffering from to-day you have nothing to do with, and that there is no blame on you. You know very well that the mining industry has been curtailed and stopped largely owing to the perpetual interruptions which they have suffered from the industrial unions. Many of the mines in the Cloncurry district would have been running right through were it not for the uncertainty of reasonable labour conditions and supplies. It is because those same gentlemen who are your dictators are the dictators of most of the unionists in the North, and they have taken hold of the copper industry, that the copper industry of Australia is in the position in which we find it to-day.

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Of course you will say "No"; you are bound to say it, but I say "Yes." We find it set forth in the Statement that the State enterprises have been a magnificent profit, but we also find that the only two profitable ventures in the State enterprises are butchers' shops and the State stations. Any profit on the stations at the present moment is an illusory one, and I am quite satisfied that when there is a real stock-taking on our stations the position will be far from the promising one disclosed by the

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Financial Statement. Further, if those stations had supplied the State butchers' shops with meat at 3d. and 3½d. per lb., the same as the primary producers have been made to do, instead of the Government selling their meat at 4½d., and proving themselves profiteers, our position with regard to State stations would have been very different. But the primary producer is the man who has to supply meat at unpayable prices, while the Government take advantage of the higher prices prevailing to make their State stations look profitable, as appears on the Statement. On the butchers' shops there is said to be a profit of £95,000. Who would not make a profit on butchers' shops when you can commandeer stock at prices at which no other man can get it, when you pay no rates and taxes, and give no delivery? I should be ashamed to claim profit under those conditions. And what reference was made to the £20,000 stolen from the Commonwealth Government for cold storage which cost this Government nothing? These things are passed over, glossed over, and when we get a full statement it will put a very different complexion on things. At the conclusion of this wonderful treatise on finance the Treasurer states—

"It is considered to be an axiom of good government that a genuine attempt should be made to finance the year's operations out of the year's revenue, and thus avoid so far as practicable the passing on to the future of the obligations of the present."

Have you always followed that axiom? Have not you passed on to the future already one of the deficits? Have you not issued Treasury bills to the tune of £250,000? I also wish to refer to what was the Treasurer's opinion of finance five years ago, and compare it word for word with this Financial Statement. It shows what a very different being the Treasurer to-day is from the hon. member for Chillagoe five years ago. He talks about financing home affairs. If the Treasurer conducted his home finances in the same way as he has conducted the State finances, he would be on the way to insolvency. He says, "If a man earns £3 a week and spends £4 a week, is he not on the way to insolvency?" He seems to think that what applies to the ordinary breadwinner does not apply to the State. This taxation which he is piling upon the taxpayers comes back on to the breadwinner whose interests he pretends to protect. One of the main reasons for the higher cost of living and for unemployment to-day is because this taxation is being passed on to the man in the street; and those men who have—or did have—confidence in you to put you where you are are suffering to-day from this taxation, and this £590,000 which is going to be further imposed is still going to be paid by the man in the street and increase the cost of the living and aggravate the unemployment. Another axiom of the Treasurer's is—

"If a man borrows £5 and pays back £7 to the money-lender in interest, and still owes £8 for the original £5 borrowed, he is a fool."

The Treasurer has castigated himself a fool, because the very axiom which he is laying down there as being foolish is the one which is standing paramount in this Financial Statement. Further on he says—

"Would you be surprised to know that the deficits of Liberal Government since Queensland was made a separate colony—

that is, from 1859 to 1914—have amounted to £4,219,708; and that the much-talked-of surpluses have only amounted to £2,600,843? Of this surplus the Morgan-Labour Government was responsible for one half. That means a total deficit of £1,618,855."

Are the people of Queensland surprised to know now that the deficit for the Labour Government in five years is £835,000, as compared with fifty-five years' deficit of £1,618,000 of late Liberal Governments. These are remarks which come home to roost, which have their boomerang effect which no doubt the Treasurer is feeling to-day. Again, he says—

"It is an eminently fair and just statement to make that the result is due entirely to wanton recklessness of the Liberal Government."

Good gracious! If one wanted to coin a phrase peculiarly applicable to the Treasurer and his bunch at the present moment, could you find one more suitable?

The PREMIER: Where is the extravagance?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We will show you a little later on, even to a greater extent than we have, and that is the most deplorable and hopeless position we find ourselves in to-day—that the man who should know where the extravagance is, who is the one to correct it, the man at the helm of Queensland finances to-day, does not know where the extravagance is. He shows his total inefficiency and inability to hold the reins of the Queensland Government. "We are spending £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 more now than three or four years ago, but where is it going? I do not know." That is his cry.

The PREMIER: The tables are there.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes, you put it down to soldier, droughts, war, and everything else that cannot answer you back.

Mr. WHITFORD: The Darra Cement Company thought that about you. (Government laughter.)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He goes on to say that "The worker is the person who suffers; the producer is the person who pays." That is why the cost of living is what it is at the present moment, and that is why you are going to be pitched out "neck and crop" as soon as the electors have the opportunity of voicing their opinions.

Mr. POLLOCK: Remember what you said on the Federal election.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes, and was it not true? The Treasurer reverts to his old platitudes when he says—

"I am convinced that any further cutting down of the Estimates would result in starving the departments or in hampering their natural and beneficial expansion, or, alternatively, would result in retrenchment of the officers of the public service, or lead to a regrettable diminution of those humane, educational, and charitable State activities which it is the duty of every community to support."

The one anchorage which the Treasurer has when he is tangled regarding his extravagance is, "Do you expect me to starve the widows and orphans?" In this case he puts it in different language. There is *not* one

on this side who wants to see retrenchment in any shape or form. What we want to see is efficiency, and, as the hon. member for Bulimba said, one man doing one man's job instead of two men doing one man's job, and the consequential inefficiency introduced. We do not want to see retrenchment. That is the one parrot cry of hon. members opposite. It was the profiteer until the Federal election showed them there was nothing in it, and now their argument is retrenchment. As the elections approach in Queensland the people are going to be told that once the National party get into power they are going to be retrenched and wages are going to be reduced, but we have not the slightest intention of retrenching any man worthy of and earning his salary, but when it comes to men flooding departments to the extent of creating financial panic and chaos as exists in the Railway Department to-day, then we are certainly going to use the pruning knife. That is not going to accentuate the position, because, with the business principles we would introduce natural expansion would take the place of State enterprises, confidence would be restored; with the result that there would be demand for employees and men such as does not exist at the present time. There would be a new outlet for the unemployed, and instead of attempting to create palliatives in the way of taxing employers to keep men who are unemployed such as is proposed by the Unemployed Workers' Bill, we are going to stamp out the unemployed menace by natural expansion. The State has wonderful resources; it is only occupied by a handful of people, and it can provide the world with endless commodities. Our business will be to see that these commodities are marketed, not by the State—we are going to see that the State performs its natural functions and protect the producer, and not interfere with him. That is what is going to happen when the National party gets into power, so let us kill once and for all the parrot cry of retrenchment, which I know is going to come from hon. members opposite now that the profiteer is dead. We stand for natural expansion, not retrenchment. In another paragraph, on page 25, the Treasurer says—

"Queensland is passing through a period of financial stress and difficulty which is the inevitable aftermath of war."

I say, without fear of contradiction, that Queensland has been better off for the war, excepting in regard to the loss of life and maiming of men; but commercially, financially, and every other way, Queensland has been better off. The Labour Government has been a far greater menace to Queensland and its development than the war, and this cannot be contradicted, because we have benefited in every direction by the war, except in the matter of loss of life and the maiming of men, which is the most terrible adjunct of war. All possible palliatives are proposed under this Financial Statement. The whole of the Government's policy is to reduce rents of houses, when there are not enough houses to go round, and taxing employers, instead of creating a natural outlet for employment. Further than that, the whole system has been one of glossing over what is one huge blunder, that is, the discouragement of private enterprise, the discouragement of everything which means the drawing out of that which is high and

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good in man, and the appealing to all that is low and common in him, saying that there is no need to work, that his employer is an enemy, that capital is a thing which should not exist at all, that the State is going to be father and mother and everything else. The system of the Labour Government and the body which is controlling them are going to be the death knell of Queensland if something speedy and drastic does not happen, and one of the very departments which are going to lead to it is the department which my friend the hon. member for Paddington controls to-day.

Mr. WHITFORD: More abuse of the railway men!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is not. I have not said anything in abuse of the railway men. I have said everything in abuse of the system and the political control which has brought it about, and I have said a good deal condemnatory—I am glad the hon. member for Mount Morgan is here—of the system which keeps a Royal Commission wandering about the face of the country looking for railways we do not want. (Interjections.) Every palliative is proposed for this condition of things except work. (Renewed interjections.)

Mr. COLLINS: You never did a useful day's work in your life.

Several other MEMBERS interjecting.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I must ask hon. members on my right to allow the hon. member for Oxley to continue his speech without interruption.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Thank you, Mr. Smith. I was wondering where the Queensland Zoological Gardens were. I have found out now. Every palliative, I say, has been proposed to meet the situation except the palliative of work. As the Premier of France said after signing the peace treaty, there is only one way to meet the situation, and that is by working, not by going slow, not by cutting down production, not by the discouragement of private enterprise, not by the system that prevails at the present moment of discouraging every man who wants to assist this country.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I think that very few of the members present seem to realise the position in which Queensland finds herself. The only bright spot about the position is the success of the Federal elections. Had the result been otherwise, the credit of Queensland and the credit of Queenslanders with their banks, enabling them to draw for business purposes, would be very different from what it is to-day. We know that our banks have released money to some extent because they have faith in the party controlling the destinies of Australia and feel that Queensland will not be allowed to go too far. Another good thing, as the last speaker said, is the very fact that Queensland has shown that she is tired of the present Government, that she will not tolerate it any longer than is necessary, and at the very first opportunity will send them about their business. That is another reason why Queensland's credit stands higher to-day; that is a reason why our farmers can draw some money from the banks; that is a reason why everyone feels secure. The business man in his business, the farmer on his

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farm—everyone feels secure because the Commonwealth elections have been won by the party whom we have seen at the top of the polls.

I am not going to deal so very much with the financial questions that have been dealt with in a very able way by the late Treasurer and the last speaker. One thing is certain—that we are neglecting every means of paying our debts. We are simply going the way of the waster and the bankrupt—we are living on borrowed money.

Mr. CARTER: You have always been going that way—following your natural bent.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Because it is easier to borrow money and spend the money in the cities of Queensland; it is easier to borrow money than earn it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Goats?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member talks about goats—he would be bought very cheap, very cheap indeed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have been spending money, losing borrowed money, and there is not the slightest incentive to earn it, or to produce wealth. We have a high standard of living to maintain, and instead of producing the wealth from the soil and by mining and manufacturing our Australian raw material into goods, we are simply borrowing money from anybody who will lend it and spending it, not on works that are going to be reproductive, not on works that are going to pay us interest. This money is going to be a burden on the people who will follow us, because a great portion of it is being spent on relief works. Some of it is also being spent in maintaining the present Government in their positions, or rather in trying to do so. I would like to know what has been the cost of sending all those men on to the western line, the cost of sending those hundreds of men there and leaving them there just long enough to enable them to get on the roll before the election. That railway has carried the traffic for thirty years, has been sufficient when there were more trains—nearly double the number of trains there are to-day. There was no need for regrading, nor any need whatever for employing those men on that railway, and yet they are sent there just long enough to enable them to get on the roll and perhaps carry the election against the will of the people of the Maranoa.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: An unqualified falsehood!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is not statesmanship, that is drift. Let me say that it stands to the credit of the navies on that line that they have shown that they have more honour and honesty in them than the men sitting on the benches across the Chamber who sent them there. They realised that they were being sent up there as voting machines, that there was a price put upon them, that their votes were to be bought, that thousands of pounds were to be spent on getting their votes. Be it said to their honour that hundreds of them—or rather, I will not say hundreds, that many of them—turned round and said, "We will not be bought like sheep and cattle. We will not be sent up here as voting machines, paid to vote. We are going to act like men and vote as we

please.' That is far more credit to the men working as navvies than to the men on the front bench who thought they could buy them like chattels. It comes to this, that the Government have to remain in power by paying gangs of voters and keeping them for no other purpose than to move them from one electorate to the other so that they can control the electorates against the will of the electors in them and override the will of the people, that they have to keep movable gangs, buying them like cattle, like a donkey you can buy in the market, to vote and keep them in their positions. All honour to those men who work as navvies, far more honourable than the men who sit there as statesmen!

Now we come to the question of the cost of living and the profiteering about which the Government have made so much. Just before the Federal elections they appointed a judge to consider the price of bread. They reduced the price of bread by $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per loaf, and that apparently is all that they have done under the Act which they took as their authority. Immediately the Federal elections were over they put the price up again. Was that an election move or not? Was it a price for votes or was it not? Here we have a judge appointed to administer an Act which, in the first place, members opposite said did not exist. Then I suppose they give their instructions, because I suppose we know that the judges have instructions now.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in reflecting on the conduct of a judge, in saying that judges received their instructions?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is quite out of order in reflecting on the conduct of any judge.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then we can say judges temperamentally fitted, who do not need orders. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: I rise to a point of order. I think that the hon. member should be made to withdraw. Is the hon. member in order in making a reflection on our judiciary?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: There is no point of order.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Thank you, Mr. Smith. The results of our courts to-day fully justify what I have said.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already called the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he is not permitted to criticise the action of any judge of the Queensland courts. I hope he will respect my ruling in this particular.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I was not criticising a judge. I was criticising the results of it all, and I think we are at liberty to do so. The late Premier, when appointing one of them, said that he was temperamentally fitted, and we have seen the result since, and I simply said that he was temperamentally fitted and did not need instructions. (Laughter.) Here are some items which have been added to the cost of living. In 1914 the income tax taken from the people of Queensland was £472,918. In 1918 the amount was £1,677,355, or £1,204,437 more than in 1914. We fully realise that all the

money taken from the people in taxation, except what the farmers pay, must be added to the cost of living. It does not matter whether you put on a land tax or shire council rates—whatever you put on any business must be passed on.

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

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In 1914 the income tax amounted to £472,918, and in 1919 the Government took from the few more people concerned £1,677,355, or an increase of £1,204,467.

The PREMIER: Not from the people, but from the wealthy.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Those are the facts taken from the official returns.

Mr. COLLINS: Taken from a few of the people.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I admit that they took it from a few of the people, and I admit the result of it. The same thing happened when this Government took possession of the meat some time ago. By taking that £1,200,000 more than any other Government from the pockets of a few people, it restricted the money that those people had to spend in giving employment. What is the result? When a grazier's credit is shortened at a bank—when the bank manager tells him he will have to reduce his credit—he has to reduce his expenditure. He has, therefore, to dismiss some of his employees, as he cannot employ men if he cannot pay them. That is why you will find Mr. Ryan's thousands tramping the dusty roads of Western Queensland asking for something to eat. That £1,204,000 has been taken from the people whose credit has been ruined, so that men have lost employment, and the people have had less money to spend.

With regard to the land tax, in 1914 the Denham Government took nothing from the people in land tax, but this year the Government has taken £578,000 in land tax alone.

Mr. COLLINS: From a few large landowners. Be fair. Tell the truth and shame the devil.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They took money from people in the shape of land tax which should have gone to find boots and clothing for their children.

The PREMIER: Give us a few particulars.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have not done with the hon. gentleman yet, and I have a good deal further to go. (Government laughter.) In land tax alone the Government took £578,253 from the people.

Mr. GUNN (Carnarvon): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in criticising the Government? (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I suppose that has arisen through the silly interjections which were made before on a point of order, when I was criticising the judges, and where it was held I was not in order in doing it.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are game to do anything.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am game to do anything which is right, but the hon. gentleman is not. (Government laughter.) In stamp duty alone, £295,470 was taken from the people by the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: It was taken off the small ones and put on the big ones.

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Mr. BEBBINGTON: Last year there was an increase of £98,000 in the stamp duty. Will any man say that, if the storekeepers have to put stamps on their bills, the amount will not be added to the cost of the goods? How could a merchant carry all these taxes? It is only fooling the people to think anything of the sort. All these taxes are added on to the cost of the goods, and that has made the present cost of living what it is. The total amount which has been added to the cost of living by the present Government is £1,884,521. Can you wonder at the cost of living going up? The Minister for Railways may smile about his railways, but the fault to-day is in the hon. gentleman meddling with the business and management of the railways. That is why the railways are in the state they are to-day. There are men and women in the Railway Department who would pull the department through if they were left alone. It is the cursed political interference that has brought the railways into the position they are in to-day. If they were left alone they would pull through. The hon. gentleman might then have a better smile on his face than he has now.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are very stupid.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will ask the hon. gentleman if this is stupid: With regard to the railrage on butter, his department has added 57 per cent. to the cost of living.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Shame!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I will explain it. In the first place, the hon. gentleman has added 12½ per cent. to the carriage of cream, and they have added 42 per cent. on the carriage of butter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The first rise put on for seventeen years.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The first rise was 42 per cent., and the second rise was 15 per cent. on dairy produce. If you take 42 per cent., 15 per cent., and 12½ per cent. on the cream, that makes altogether 57 per cent. which the Government has put on one article of food alone, in connection with the railrage charges on it. These are facts, and you cannot deny them. The Minister for Railways will not deny them, because he knows what I say is correct. If you come down to profiteering, I suppose there is no greater combination than the one which exists between the Government and the meatworks. There never was a greater combination to come together to practically defraud the public. One of the conditions that the Government got a certain amount of meat from the meatworks was that the Government agree to close the border of Queensland. That was an unlawful act, and the Premier knows it. The Premier knows that the Government entered into an agreement with the meatworks to close the border and prevent the cattle from going South. That forced all the cattle through the meatworks so that these people could get their profits out of the meat, and, therefore, they allowed the Government certain concessions.

Mr. PAYNE: It was not unlawful. What about the Mooraberrie case?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Mooraberrie case was the result of it. We know that a Government can make laws under which they can seize a man's hat or boots or anything else.

Mr. KIRWAN: They cannot seize your intelligence, because you have not got any.

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Mr. BEBBINGTON: We know that the Government put three Acts on the statute-book which allowed them to seize private people's property. It might be lawful to do it, but it is not just or reasonable. It was an Act of Parliament that allowed the Government to seize the widow woman's cattle. (Laughter.) Some hon. members opposite got £3,000 or £4,000 out of that case.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Oh! Oh!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did not some of the lawyers on your side get money out of that case? Is not that correct? The socialist lawyers got something out of the seizures of the cattle and they cannot deny it. There never was a greater combine than the one which existed between the Government and the meatworks to seize the people's property and defraud the producers in every way. Look at the profiteering that goes on in the State butchers' shops. We know that they charge the consumer 100 per cent. on the cost of the meat. Is not that profiteering? When the meat goes into the State butchers' shops it costs 100 per cent. to distribute it, although there is no delivery of meat to the people's homes. The Government buys the meat at 3d. and sells it at 6d. a lb., which is 100 per cent. profit.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: You don't know what you are talking about.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I do know what I am talking about, and I do know I am stating facts. I know that certain foreigners who are friends of the Government take their motor-cars to the State butchers' shops in the early morning and get all the choice joints, and when the poor housewife comes along afterwards for her meat she has to take what she can get. (Government laughter.) That is quite true. These friends of the Government go down in their motor-cars and get as much as 900 lb. of meat at a time. These are the friends of the Government and they keep cheap boarding-houses and cheap restaurants. I do not think that is fair at all. So far as the railways are concerned, we know quite well that the losses on the railways are caused through the political control and political interference. I have every confidence in the railway men. We have as good men in the Railway Department as you can get anywhere.

Mr. BRENNAN: You are smoodging.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not smoodging. I said some men in the Railway Department. I do not refer to the red rag friends of the hon. gentleman, the men who walk about the streets and refuse to work, and do as they like. No one has any control over men of that sort. These men do just as they like, and they are the cause of the ruin of our railways to-day. The average earnings on the railways are so small that it means that these men earn only £17 10s. a year. The taxpayer has to make up the balance which the railways cost to run. It is all owing to political interference. The Minister for Railways knows perfectly well that it was through him that £30,000 was lost in Northern Queensland. It was owing to his mismanagement. At one time the meatworks used to buy their stock on the station, but now they will not buy on the station because there is no security of delivery. The railway men do just as they like, and either take the cattle or leave them, so the meatworks will not buy on the station at the present time. They buy for delivery at the meatworks, and if

the cattle cannot be delivered at the meat-works then the producers lose by it. There were a lot of cattle delivered at Townsville. They were fat cattle when they were delivered, but they became stores and had to be sent back. On that occasion there was £30,000 of private citizens money lost owing to the interference of the hon. gentleman. At one time the hon. member for North Brisbane said that he could save a large amount of money in running the railways. I am sure that hon. gentleman would not allow fat cattle to be turned out and become stores, and he would not allow private citizens to lose £30,000 just because the Government failed to govern.

Our financial position is on the wrong side of the ledger. Before that Government came into power we had men coming from the other States to produce wealth—men who took up our land and brought £10,000 or £12,000 with them, which they spent in making and improving homes. To-day, the only men you have coming here—according to the Treasurer's statement himself, if he is reported correctly—you have the I.W.W. men and O.B.U. men coming here merely to live on the Government, and, as the Treasurer said, they were brought here from America and other States, and took possession of the unions, stopping all our means of production, while the producers—the men who have produced wealth—are getting out of it, and going where they are safe. Another reason why we are not producing more wealth is because there is a Government in power pledged to destroy the wealth-producers. Why should a man produce wealth when the Government are taking every opportunity of placing on the statute-book measures to seize the citizens' property. I wonder that our financial position is not worse than it is to-day.

Now we come to the man on the land. It is a misfortune for Queensland that the Labour people sent such a class of men to legislate as are in this House—men who know nothing whatever about production. The man on the land has certainly had no encouragement.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Owing to the drought.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have fought many droughts, and would possibly get through this if we had some encouragement to-day; but we are suffering from laws made by the caucus in the Trades Hall—men who will not go on the land themselves, men who cannot produce, and who know absolutely nothing about production; still these laws are being forced on the statute-book. The party opposite have no will of their own: they are controlled by the wires outside, and this is what has brought about the position in Queensland to-day, so far as land laws are concerned. We are suffering from land laws made by men who will not go on the land themselves, but want to make conditions which other people cannot live under.

Several GOVERNMENT MEMBERS interrupting.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Just to give you an idea. The State's officers think £4 to £6 a square mile a fair rental to get for grazing land. The best grazing land in Queensland to-day is rented at from about £4 to £6 a square mile. The same party that says that

£4 a square mile is a fair rental on land have imposed a land tax of £32 a mile on the freeholder. How do you think men are going to remain on the land under those conditions? There can only be one intention, and that is to hunt the man off the land. It is just as bad to go and take a man's home from him, to impose a tax on his home which practically takes it from him, as it would be to take the money away from his account in the Savings Bank. I know they will stop at one just as much as the other. When the time comes, and the laws they have placed on the statute-book to give them power to take the private citizen's property, when they have got sufficient power—but they never will, because they will very soon get less, they will be like Ryan's thousand—tramping the dusty roads of Queensland: but when they passed that law their intention was when they got sufficient power to close in on the banks, and on the land, and everything else, and turn everything over to the State, such as they did in Hungary; but their dreams will not be realised. So far as taxing the land is concerned, you might just as well tax a workman's tools which he has to earn his living with. The farmer's land is his means of living, and yet this party taxes it. The professional man who is earning his £3,000 or £4,000 is not taxed. He can buy an allotment up to £300 and build a home on it worth £2,000 or £3,000, and he pays no land tax. The way this Government is going on at the present time will lead to bankruptcy. If you are going to live above your means, which you are doing now, you will find before very long that your credit will be gone. The Government have robbed the farmer of his credit, and the State will very soon be robbed of theirs if they keep on as they are going.

The hon. member for Oxley has explained why it was that the recent loan was floated. It was not floated because of the actions of members on that side of the House who will sell their country, and did sell their country at the Perth Conference, but because of the actions of the soldiers who went to the war and fought for Queensland and shed their blood in defence of the liberties [7.30 p.m.] of the people. It was on their account that the loan was floated, and not on account of the policy pursued by members on the Government side of the House. To-day no one will spend money in Queensland, but down South there are firms who are spending millions of pounds to increase the value of their businesses. Those people can spend £1,000,000 in Victoria or in some other State, and they can buy our dairy produce there, give double the price for it that the dairymen can get for their produce here, and then send it up to Queensland, because there is no security in Queensland which would induce anyone to spend £1,000,000 on factories. I propose now to show the Committee the difference between the conditions in town life and the conditions in country life, and for that purpose I shall read an article which explains the matter in the proper light. I know that members on that side of the House know nothing about this matter, and it is for their information that I propose to read the article. The writer says—

"There are worse things even than broken finances; there are broken hearts, broken lives, broken homes."

But, "broken hearts, broken lives, broken

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homes" are nothing to hon. members opposite, because they had a hand in ruining those homes. The writer goes on to say—

"This, then, is the story of the small man on the drought-stricken land. And let it be understood at once that for every 'big man' on the land there are scores of small men. The 'big man' suffers, of course, and his losses are a national loss because they mean less wool and meat for the State; but it is the small man's lot that in a drought is poignant; it is his that is the greatest personal tragedy.

"The small man is up at daylight walking about and working and worrying. There are the cows to feed first. Some of them are so poor that they have to be 'lifted.' Chaff bags or cornsacks are put under them, and they are stood on their feet, slowly dying. In this way the cow will be kept alive for a few days longer, or, perhaps, a week, and in that time the life-giving rain might come. Hand-feeding cannot save the cows once they get so low, but the lifting and the feeding extend the fighting chance, and so it is taken. The small man must save every beast he can, for one cow means more to him than a hundred head to the big man."

I have not time to read the whole of the article, but I think I ought to quote the following:—

"The children go off to school, after having helped about the place, sad and slow. The drought to them, too, is real, and they almost forget how to be happy with the abandon of youth. There is drought work before school for them to do, there is drought work after school; and there isn't any time for games. Their lunch is bread and treacle, perhaps; the treacle has long since soaked the bread right through and is dry. Or maybe there is only dry bread to-day. Some children, possibly, of the town, are more fortunate, and have cake or jam tarts, which they share with the others. The bush kiddies know how to be kind, and they share what they have in the dark days of drought.

"Small farmers and settlers—stock-owners and wheatgrowers—are failing all over the country to-day through no fault of their own. They have fought the good fight to the last ditch, they have kept on going sixteen hours a day, they have never said die, and their wives and children have stood by them and done their bit. But the drought is proving too much for them, and they are going down and out. Out on to the roads looking for work, into the small towns, into the cities. And once they are driven off the land by drought they will never go back to it."

Hon. members opposite cannot realise that those are the conditions which prevail in the country, and they collect taxes from land which grows nothing; they send their tax gatherer to drought-stricken farms in order to collect their taxes. The rules of this House do not permit me to say what I think those gentlemen are, but they are not angels. A Government who will take the last penny from a man who is cultivating land or has cultivated land that grows nothing deserves to go out, and the taxpayers will see that they do go out at the very first opportunity. Let

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me now show you how different are the conditions in city life. The men sitting over there have taken from the men on the land the little bit of produce they did produce, and have given that produce to the class of people that I am going to read about now, and I ask you, can you wonder that I should say that the actions of hon. members opposite make this Chamber more like a dog fight than anything else? But what can you expect from men who do not understand the conditions of country life? Here is a letter which shows the conditions that are to be found in city life—

"There was a record attendance at Ascot on Saturday. It was a day of days, when every woman was determined to outdo even her own highest traditions. No one can say that women, especially Queensland women, do not rise to the occasion. Never was there a more costly parade as that on the lawn. The dressing must have run into some thousands of pounds, for with the inevitable few freaks, the women dressed richly and in good taste. Transparency and shadow were, of course, on view, but not to any great extent. The hats were really weird and wonderful, a few that shrieked for notice were worthy of a museum. They were the latest thing in vegetable decoration. A running wreath of crisp green parsley punctuated with waxen beet."

That is what we find in the town—dressing which "must have run into thousands of pounds." Contrast that with the condition of the people in the country, and then remember that members opposite take even the treacle off their bread. As I have said, the present Government send their tax-gatherers to the drought-stricken farms in order to collect their imposts. That shows you the kind of Government we have in power in Queensland to-day. You cannot wonder that the people are going to turn them out as quickly as possible, and you cannot wonder that the Federal Government won the elections hands down as they did.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I want to know what the women on the racecourse did with the treacle which they took off the children's bread. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It would be interesting to define what class of Government this is: very interesting. In the first place it is not real. It has a kind of veneer over it like you get on some furniture. When they wanted to put the seizure of farmers' property in the forefront of their platform Mr. Ryan said, "No, put it in the background; let us have the veneer on top." (Government laughter.) Those were the words of the Hon. T. J. Ryan when he said, "Keep that in the background, because we have to face the electors, and then when we get sufficient power we can bring it in." Below this veneer, when you scratch the top, what do you find? You have got the Bolshevik: you have got the revolutionist. The Premier admitted that some of the unions are filled with revolutionists. The Premier knows that. Everything is done to hide that. Everything is done to keep it back from the people who have got votes. It is a very difficult thing to define what class of a Government this is. If you take them for what they claim to be, that is an international socialist Government, there is no sense in it. They say, "We are international socialists." If they are international socialists what are they going to do with Australia?

Australia is a small nation, with just about 5,000,000 people, and at our back door we have 500,000,000 people who are so far below our civilisation that they will not and cannot come up to it nor can we bring them up to it. If they are international socialists, what are they going to do with those 500,000,000 people? Are they going to bring them up to our civilisation or are they going to bring Australians down to their civilisation?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You cannot do it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They admit that they cannot do it, and yet they try to get the international socialists' votes and try to get the other people's votes as well. They have not solved the question as to what they are going to do with these 500,000,000 people who practically surround us here. If Australia is going to progress, she can only do it while she is safe.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who is going to keep her safe?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: These men over there have said, "Cut the painter and leave us at the mercy of those 500,000,000 Asiatics."

Mr. BRENNAN: Who said that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Didn't they advise that?

Mr. BRENNAN: Who did?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Labour party at the Perth conference. Those are the conditions under which they would have us live to-day. They would have us practically cut off from all protection by any other Power and leave us here a prey to the 500,000,000 people who are so far below our civilisation that they cannot and will not come up to it. What class of men are they? They have proved that they are unfit to manage the affairs of a country like Queensland, and the sooner the taxpayers have the privilege of getting rid of them the better. There are ways of paying our debt honestly and leading Queensland and Australia into a position to maintain the standard of living which we have set down, and perhaps a higher standard. But you cannot maintain that standard unless you earn the money to do it. If a man or woman sets out to live up to a certain standard that is going to cost a certain amount of money, then that money has to be earned in order to maintain that standard of living. There is no difference between the standard of a private individual and the standard of a State. If we are going to have a certain standard of living, then the money has to come from the land, from the mines, and from the works to maintain it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Out of labour.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Out of labour certainly, but can you expect anything when you have a Government that is pledged to destroy industry?

Mr. COLLINS: That is not true.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Very well, I will read it. (Government laughter.) I will read from their own conference report. It is as follows:—

"THE NEED OF CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS.

"One of the educational needs of the hour is to bring the worker to a fuller realisation of the need of greater class consciousness amongst them. The fond hope some of them may have that they

may become employers and exploiters of labour must be driven from their minds."

Mr. VOWLES: Who said that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The president of the Labour conference, and endorsed by T. J. Ryan and signed by him.

The bell indicated the hon. member's time allowed by the Standing Orders had expired.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I stand here—(Government laughter)—as a representative of the primary producers of the State. (Renewed laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: With three gold rings on your fingers.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I wish I had a dozen, and you wish you had them too, Charlie Collins. Don't be envious. (Loud laughter.)

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Thou shalt not covet they neighbour's "goods."

HON. J. G. APPEL: When hon. members on that side of the House go out into the farming districts of this State and endeavour to induce the farmers and the primary producers to believe that they are their only friends and the only men who desire their welfare and their betterment—I could only wish that a representative body of these primary producers could sit in this House and observe the way in which the primary producers are deceived when a man like the hon. member for Drayton gets up and advocates their rights.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It was because of what he said.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I do not care what he said or what he did not say, the hon. member for Drayton is a man who knows from A to Z all that is necessary to be done for our primary producers. He knows the business from the milking of a cow to the driving of an engine and to the management of a cheese factory. That hon. member has proved his ability to carry out all that is necessary in that respect. Hon. members sitting on that side of the House—some of them—do not know the back end of a cow from the front. (Loud laughter.) When they talk of butter-fat, and advance theories of butter production, as the hon. member for Port Curtis does, they absolutely show their lack of knowledge and their lack of interest so far as the primary producers of the State are concerned.

Mr. CARTER: If I wrote about lager, you would understand it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member knows a great deal more about lager than ever I could learn; not lager, but treble X.

At five minutes to 8 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*) relieved Mr. Smith in the chair.

HON. J. G. APPEL: We are discussing to-night the Financial Statement of the Treasurer. I do not propose to say anything more than I said to the electors in the Commonwealth elections as to the immorality of withholding that Statement from the electors of the State before that election. We all know what the object was. We all know that if that Statement had been presented to the Federal electors of the State, the defeat of the Labour party would have been greater than it was. They call it a victory. It is a pyrrhic victory. I hope they have many victories of the same kind. The withholding of the date of the elections for the

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State by-elections with the object of introducing railway camps into the different electorates so that those railway workers who were their parasites and their things—if I may say so—(Government Members: Oh!)—could vote and influence the electorates into which they were introduced, is a matter of political immorality with the like of which, thank God, I in my political career have never been associated, and with which I never would have been associated. For political tricks, for political immorality, commend me to the Labour party, to hon. members sitting on that side of the House. When I see some hon. members there who, I know, believe honestly in their principles, I cannot understand and I cannot realise how they can support tactics of that character. I stand here practically alone—(laughter)—as I have stood on other occasions; but so long as I am a member of this House, so long as I have a voice—

Mr. BRENNAN: Casabianca!

HON. J. G. APPEL: That member—I will call him "That member"—who declined to give sauce to the poor, sick, and infirm. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: The sick do not need sauce. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: Look at him! Look at him! He does not want any sauce. (Renewed laughter.) He has no sympathy with the poor members of the community. Call that a Labour man! Look at it, Mr. Walker! (Loud laughter.) A more hypocritical production, a more misleading production never have I seen than the Financial Statement of the Premier, who is also the Treasurer.

Mr. BRENNAN: Now, now; don't be unkind. (Loud laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: Has that hon. member received the imprimatur of that secret caucus, that secret junta concerning which I have often spoken in this House? That secret junta of irresponsibles, more infamous than the tyranny of the Czardom of Russia! (Interruption.)

Mr. COLLINS: What rot!

HON. J. G. APPEL: More infamous than the tyranny of the infamous "Council of Ten" who sat in secret conclave in Venice, and who deprived the Venetian public of their liberty. More infamous than any despotism that the world has ever known. Hon. members smile under their chains. They have never dared to deny that they are subjects and slaves to that secret caucus that sits in Turbot street. I have mentioned this matter on different occasions in this House, and I have been confirmed in what I said by so valiant and prominent a member of the Labour party as the hon. member for Capricornia, the Hon. Mr. Higgs. Do hon. members deny that he is a Labour man? He has stated the case more fully and more completely than I could do.

Mr. BRENNAN: When?

HON. J. G. APPEL: Read the paper. The hon. member never reads anything. If the hon. member had any brains and they were of dynamite and exploded, they would not blow his hat off.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is an old gag.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Well, it is a true one as far as the hon. member is concerned. Do hon. members sitting on that side of the

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House deny that William Guy Higgs is a Labour man? And has not he exposed the tactics of those irresponsibles who sit in Turbot street in secret caucus, not elected as representatives of the people, yet controlling the actions of the representatives of the people?

Mr. COLLINS: That is not true.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. member for Bowen knows that he is one of the most abject creatures of that caucus. He knows it is absolutely true. We have William Guy Higgs, the member for Capricornia, a member of the Labour party, publicly stating, upon his re-election, that the conduct of the secret caucus of irresponsibles who control the conduct of the election in Queensland is the matter of the gravest danger to the Labour party.

Mr. COLLINS: Wrong again.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Poor slaves! Anyway, I am not under the control of any secret caucus. I do not owe my selection or election to a secret caucus; but when I look at them I can well see that they are the selects of a secret caucus which has simply chosen them because they are abject slaves who will do the will and desire of that secret caucus.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: You were only a cipher in the Denham Cabinet—you admitted it.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You were never a member of any Cabinet, and never will be if you live to be as old as Methuselah. (Laughter.) A more coldblooded scientific attempt to extract all that it is possible to extract from the taxpayers of the State I have never seen than that exhibited in this Financial Statement.

I shall now deal with one matter which affects the primary producers of the State—that is, the increase in the railway fares and freights. I am satisfied, from what I know of the Hon. the Minister, that had he been free and unfettered those freights would not have been increased. I only regret that the hon. member is not Premier—without wishing to make any reflection on the hon. member who is Premier—because I know that the Premier has absolutely no heart and absolutely no sympathy with the primary producers of the State. I believe that the Minister for Railways is sympathetic.

Mr. HODGE: Has he not proved it? (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I have a personal knowledge of the hon. member, and if he were only Premier—as he ought to be—we would have had a Financial Statement that would have been more equitable than the Statement which we are discussing to-night.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the Lieutenant-Governor?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I may as well deal with that question. I say that the members who are sitting on the Government benches—the Labour party—the party who say they represent the wage slaves, have made more nice soft appointments than any other party; but do the rank and file of the Labour party get those positions? I ask the hon. member for Bowen—do their rank and file get those beautiful soft billets for life that have been given out by the Labour party? We have now an appointment which shows an absolute disregard for parliamentary privileges, because that partisan rag—the "Standard"—

that partisan rag which does not print cablegrams which disagree with its politics—and some people call it a newspaper—that partisan rag was the first sheet which contained the announcement of the appointment of the Hon. William Lennon to the position of Lieutenant-Governor, an announcement which should first have been communicated to the members of this honourable House. Hon. members opposite, when they were sitting on this side of the House, talked of the dignity of the House.

Mr. WEIR interjected.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Ah! What can one expect from a political rabble like hon. members there, from political condottieri, from that set of political banditti? So far as the taxpayers and the people are concerned, that is all they are. They pay no direct taxation. They are parasites; they the banditti.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Hoboes.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They have said it themselves—hoboes on society and the unfortunate taxpayers of the State. We have an appointment to a most important position—

Mr. COLLINS: You ought to join the I.W.W.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I will voice what I have to say despite any interjection by the hon. member or anybody else, and, thank goodness, I have the voice to do it and the ability to do it. The hon. member, standing on a cart-tail or a box, has talked so much tripe for so long that he has almost commenced to believe it is true. I believe he is honest in a way. I have the greatest respect for the Hon. William Lennon—a man whom I have known for many years, both here and in Townsville—but I consider that his appointment is absolutely and politically immoral. If the Nationalist party sat on that side of the House and attempted to make the number of appointments to soft billets which have been made by the friends of the serf slaves, I wonder what the serf slaves would think? I wonder what they will think when they see that the Hon. William Lennon has been appointed for his life to a new position which carries a salary of £1,000 per annum and of £1,500 per annum when the Governor is absent, with all his perquisites. What do the poor wage slaves and serfs say to that? (Government laughter.) I ask the hon. member for Bowen what their wage slaves and serfs have to say when they see the toney men of the party appointed to these positions? His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor! What will the wage slaves and serfs, whom the hon. member for Bowen and other hon. members opposite say they are representing, have to say about that? I was elected as an independent member—as a primary producers' member—for the electorate I represent.

Mr. WHITFORD: By the "Courier."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is a great paper with the hon. member. I remember the "Courier" classing me, when I lost an election, as a socialist democrat, and my views are as democratic to-day as they were then. Have hon. members opposite shown their faith in democracy? How have they proved it? They have simply proved it by being nominated by their organisations, and they are sitting and voting as slaves and not representing their electorates, and they claim to be democrats. All I can say is that I can claim to be a democrat, because I have fought for the right. I have stood

up in this House, and on many a platform, for the freedom and welfare of the boys who went with me barefooted to school. I stand for them, but hon. members opposite are ashamed to own that they ever went barefooted to school. I am proud that I ever went barefooted to school, and that I am in this House to-night. I speak for the freedom and manhood of Australia, but hon. members opposite who are slaves—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I request the hon. member to address himself more closely to the subject before the Committee, and also to address the Chair and not be continually inviting interjections.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I readily obey your injunction to address the Chair. At the same time, you must remember that this is a matter of Supply upon which grievances may be discussed, and I propose to voice and discuss the grievances which are in my heart. I was proceeding to deal with the immorality of the appointment of the Lieutenant-Governor.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*): I rise to a point of order. I think this farce of abusing the representative of the Sovereign has gone quite far enough. This was done on several occasions here to-day. It is clearly laid down in "May" that such discussion cannot be countenanced by an Assembly such as this. I ask you, Sir, to look up page 296 of "May's Parliamentary Practice," 1917, which shows that any reflection on the Sovereign, or any representative of the Sovereign, cannot be allowed. The commission of the gentleman whose name was mentioned has now been signed, and he is the representative of the Sovereign at the present time. Therefore, I think it is time the indecent, unmanly, and unparliamentary references which the hon. member is making, and which other hon. members indulged in, came to an end.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear! and Opposition dissent.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I wish to point out to hon. members that "May" is pretty clear in reference to statements reflecting on the Sovereign or his representative. I think, however, that in dealing with the question of the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor hon. members may deal with the action of His Majesty's advisers, and that so long as the hon. member for Albert confines himself to that point and no reference is made to the action of the Sovereign he will be in order.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He must not reflect upon the Lieutenant-Governor, because he is appointed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: He must not reflect upon the conduct of the Lieutenant-Governor, who is the King's representative. I request the hon. member, in continuing his speech, to apply himself more closely to the subject-matter of the debate, and not indulge in such flamboyant language.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I have said that I personally respect the Hon. William Lennon, with whom I am on terms of friendship, and possibly, so far as the hon. gentleman is concerned, no more suitable appointment could have been made. I am not reflecting upon the hon. gentleman, but on the immorality of the method of his appointment, and the immorality of the Labour

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party in increasing the number of soft billets for their supporters, which are not participated in by the rank and file—the wage serfs and slaves mentioned by the hon. member for Bowen.

MR. GLEDSON: Do you mean to say the King was immoral in making the appointment?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I say that his advisers were politically immoral in recommending the appointment. We know the King takes the advice of his advisers, however politically immoral that advice may be. I simply want to point out to the supporters of the Labour party that the men who represent them have never done anything for labour, but are living on labour. They are living on the funds which are contributed by members of the unions—they are absolute political parasites. I have no hesitation in saying that these men who represent the Labour party are fattening on the funds contributed by the unfortunate members of the unions, who until they have paid an entrance fee, and monthly fees, are not entitled to work—who are poll-taxed. These representatives have never done anything for the Labour party, and I call them absolute parasites. There is no question about it.

MR. F. A. COOPER: Don't you mean parasites? (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, I mean parasites, like hon. members opposite. (Laughter.)

MR. F. A. COOPER: I don't pronounce Beau-desert like you do.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You cannot, because you are a parasitical hypocrite. All you can do is to secure your nomination for the seat and obey the behests of the caucus. (Laughter.) That is all you can do, and you look it. (Laughter.)

MR. F. A. COOPER: You don't look it. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am an honest Australian of the second generation. That is more than you can say, and you do not look as if you do credit to your food. (Laughter.)

MR. F. A. COOPER: You don't look as if you do credit to your drink. (Laughter.)

HON. J. G. APPEL: You do it in secret. (Laughter.)

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I request hon. members to allow the hon. member for Albert to continue his speech without interruption. (Hear, hear!)

HON. J. G. APPEL: If we were not aware of the record of the Labour party which produces this Statement, we might believe it, but, having in our mind the record of the party opposite, what is it? What is it? We all know that the leaders of the party sitting opposite displaced the Nationalist party. When they sought to displace the Nationalist party they spoke of the borrowing of the Nationalist party and of the methods that were adopted and they had a little bit of a catechism issued in which they said—

“Loans may be necessary for reproductive work, but is it any wonder that our debt amounts to £52,000,000, and that our debt per head of the population is over £80.

“Do you know that a man, his wife, and family of four owe £490 of the debt of Queensland?”

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This is the production of the Premier and the Minister for Railways. They go on to say—

“Do you know that a man who has a wife and family of four pays £80 in interest on loans every year, which means 7s. per week. Don't you think that system should be altered?”

Don't you think the system should be altered? That is what they wanted to impress upon the electors of the State when they sought to displace the Nationalist Government. Then they further say—

“Just ponder on the awful stupidity of a policy that permits of our receiving about £11,000,000 of money, paying back in interest £16,500,000 and still owing about £12,000,000. That is the sort of Liberal finance which caused the great bank smash in 1893.”

What do we find to-day? We find the Government going on the London market and they have to pay for a loan equal to 6½ per cent., a most unheard of amount so far as Queensland is concerned. And, furthermore, they are freeing those who invest in that loan from income tax and death duties. According to our death duties, that is worth 35 per cent. The Government went to the electors of the State with that cry and the electors of the State were mistaken. I might remind the Committee of what I said a few nights ago, that the policy of the Labour party is like the rattling of some stones in a tin dish to endeavour to get hold of the shy horse—the shy horse being the electors of Queensland. This pamphlet is the tin dish and the printed matter the stones which they are rattling and endeavouring to induce the electors of the State to believe that members opposite are the most able financiers that exist in the State. The Nationalist party always showed a credit balance in connection with the Trust Account. What do we find to-day? We find from the Auditor-General's report that the Trust Account is in debt. Every account in connection with the State is in debt, and the State is practically insolvent. In speaking on public platforms during the recent Federal campaign, I said that if a private company or individual indulged in finance the same as the present Government, then they would not only be in the bankruptcy court, but they would probably be in Boggo Road Gaol or St. Helena. I repeat here to-night that the ineptness of the present Administration has brought the fair State of Queensland to such a condition that anyone who is interested in it must view it with absolute alarm. The Treasurer estimates that he will make up the deficiency and have a surplus. What is his record? During the years that he has occupied that position on every occasion he said he was going to have a surplus. Did he have a surplus? No.

He always had a very large [8.30 p.m.] deficit. That has been the result of the administration of the present Labour party. Since the present party have been in office, there has been an accumulation of taxation, and upon whose shoulders has that taxation fallen? It is all very well to say it has fallen upon the shoulders of those best able to bear it, but it has not. In a majority of cases it has fallen upon the shoulders of men who are absolutely unable to bear it—upon the shoulders of the men who have to bear the “scientific” taxation, as the Hon. the Treasurer

sarcastically called it, and with the result that to-day there are 5,000 unemployed in Brisbane.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Nonsense! Rot!

HON. J. G. APPEL: It is all very well for hon. members to say "Rot," because they have no sympathy with the unemployed. They are well cared for. What do they care for the unemployed? I have sympathy for the unemployed, and know the reason for that unemployment. It is the actions of the present Administration. We have increased wages. I believe in the wage-earner receiving what is justly due to him, but what is the good of increasing his wages when you increase the tax to such an extent that his increased wages are of less value to him than the wages he had heretofore, and when, by that increased taxation, enterprise has been strangled as it has in Queensland. Is that evidence of administration for the benefit of the workers of the State? I ask that because I have risen from the lowest wrung of the ladder—I could not be lower, because I went to school barefooted. I have sympathy for the workers, not the sham sympathy of hon. members opposite, because their sympathy is only to gain their votes, while mine is to see them improve their conditions. We have men preaching what is called class-consciousness, whereby men are striving to alienate the different members of the community one from the other, to raise up hatred of one class to the other, when we must realise that it is only by the absolute unity of every member of the community that we can hope to prosper. But we have these parasites, these paid agitators, living on the workers of the State, endeavouring to cause friction between men who should stand and work together. Knowing that, and desiring to see the State prosper, I think it my duty to advocate that which, even these parasites will admit, is for the benefit of the State and of the community—namely, that there should be a combined effort of the workers and the employers to endeavour to do what they can to prosper the State, and thus improve their condition.

With regard to the increased railway fares, I am quite satisfied that when the Minister made the statement, before the Federal elections, that there would be no increase in freights and fares, he bona fide meant it. He said the railways were not intended to pay—that they were there for the benefit of the community. Unfortunately, the Premier—who has not the warm heart of the Minister for Railways—commanded by the secret caucus, said that the fares and freights should be increased. The unfortunate workers are to be victimised to the extent of 30 per cent., and yet members opposite call themselves the friends of the wage slaves. They support legislation whereby the unfortunate workers who desire to live in the suburbs, where they can get freer and more healthy conditions, have this hardship inflicted upon them. I am sorry, Mr. Premier, that you did it, because you have inflicted a severe burden upon the workers, and one which will militate greatly against any increase in their wages, and which will also militate against their going into the suburbs where they could have more healthy conditions. I know that the Premier has no sympathy with the workers of the State. I know that from his action in increasing the freights and fares on the suburban railways. That

action shows that he has absolutely no sympathy with the workers of the State who desire to live in the freer conditions of the suburbs. There is likewise an increase in fares and freights as far as producers are concerned. That good old donkey has to bear the burden every time.

AN HONOURABLE MEMBER: And you represent them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Yes, I represent them, and the hon. member misrepresents them. That good old donkey has to bear the burden every time. How does the Premier reconcile the statement made before the Federal election by the Acting Premier that there would be no increase in railway fares and freights with his action in increasing those charges after that statement was made? I am quite satisfied that the Minister for Railways would not have increased the fares unless he was compelled to do it. What compelled him to do it? What caused the Premier, after that statement was made, to do that injustice to the workers and primary producers of the State?

THE PREMIER: Why are you attacking me?

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am not attacking the hon. gentleman personally. For him personally I have a great regard; but I say that politically he has done a great and gross injustice to the workers and primary producers of the State. The hon. gentleman may say that the fares, even with the increases which have been made, are cheaper than the fares in New South Wales. But do the Government give the same service as is given in New South Wales? The Government endeavoured to reduce the tramway fares, although they were lower than the tramway fares in New South Wales. If, then, they endeavoured to reduce the tramway fares, what is the reason, with the miserable service which they give to the public, that they are increasing the railway fares? There was a better railway service in Queensland twenty-five years ago than there is to-day. Yet the Government, in an endeavour to excuse themselves for raising the fares, compare those fares with the fares charged in New South Wales, but say nothing about the miserable service and the miserable dog-boxes they give to second-class passengers in this State. Unfortunately, a number of the workers of the State ride second class. I frequently ride second class myself, and I can say that the Government compel the workers of the State to ride in miserable dog-boxes, and then call themselves the friends of the workers, the wage serfs, the wage slaves. Driven by the infamous caucus, which holds its secret sittings in Turbot street, they are compelled to do these acts. Is it not a parody on constitutional government that in Queensland, one of the freest States in the world, with the freest franchise in the whole universe, a Government are compelled to do these things? How is it that so many more thousands of people are on the rolls than actually exist in the State, and this under a pure, honest Labour Government, who pose as men who stand for purity and honesty, but who really stand for absolute political immorality and dishonesty? Even the graves yawn, and the dead walk forth and vote; and for whom do they vote? For the honest, the pure Labour party. The handwriting is on the wall. The Labour party say that the Federal elections were a victory for them. Mr. Higgs does not say

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so; but the members of the Labour party here claim that they had a victory at that election. I am satisfied, if they are.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*): I wish to say a few words on this question. Unfortunately, I have not got such a strong voice as some of the speakers who have preceded me, and I hope the House will give me a fair and impartial hearing, not only for the sake of myself, but because I want the "Hansard" people to hear what I have to say without irrelevant interruptions, such as the last speaker and the speaker before him had to endure. The members sitting behind the Government, from one end of the House to the other, baited those hon. members, and, of course, drew a lot of unnecessary verbosity that we could very well do without. I am afraid that this House is not improving in its conduct, and that is one of the reasons that it is not my intention to offer myself for re-election at the next election. We must remember that we are getting high salaries to represent the people of Queensland, and we ought to be a dignified Chamber, and endeavour to carry out the business of the country in a more dignified manner than we have done in the past. There is an old saying to the effect that "He whom the gods wish to destroy they first drive mad," and it seems to me that the present occupants of the Treasury benches are fast being driven mad. Every day we hear of some action that is calculated to drive them from the bench they now occupy. We have been told that a certain gentleman has been appointed to the position of Lieutenant-Governor. I have nothing to say against that gentleman personally. You must remember that, according to the traditions of the House, the Governor, the Acting Governor, and the President of the Legislative Council are impartial. The last person appointed as Lieutenant-Governor was Sir Arthur Morgan, who was then President of the Legislative Council. We must remember that the Legislative Council is supposed to be non-party and impartial, and the example that was set on that occasion could very well have been followed on this occasion. Why did the Government not appoint the President of the Legislative Council to the position of Lieutenant-Governor on this occasion? But, no; they came to this House and took a partisan. A partisan is all very well in politics, but I do not care whether it is a follower of this side or a follower of that side, he must have some party feeling after taking part in the political warfare that is carried on in this House. I think it is a very unfortunate appointment, and is one of the things that is going to help drive the Government out of office at the next election.

We must remember that when this Government came into power in 1915 they were going to initiate a new method of finance. The old method of finance was to give the private individual a fair and square go. He could carry on his farm or station or whatever it might be and the Government of the State protected him. But the Labour party think private enterprise is a mistake. They believe in the nationalisation of all means of production, distribution, and exchange, and their idea was to nationalise all these things and eventually to nationalise everything. We have the railways controlled by the Government. Then they said, "We will nationalise the stations and the sawmills, and we will finance the State out of the

profits on these national industries." Some time ago there was issued a book called "Socialism at Work," and on the front page there was printed the words "With the compliments of Mr. T. J. Ryan, Premier of Queensland." There is set out in that book what the Government propose to do, and I will quote from page 7, where it says—

"Taxation might have been increased till reaching breaking point, beyond which the people could not pay; loans might have been piled to a crushing mountain of debt for the shoulders of posterity; or the State might engage in industry, and by that means honourably earn, for the whole of the people, profit which previously found its way into the pockets of a numerically small class of the community. Desiring to lighten rather than to increase the burden of taxation, and determined to enter into no obligations which the country could not be regarded safely as able to meet, the Queensland Labour Government naturally adopted the policy of launching upon State enterprises, which would—

(1) By selling to the public more cheaply than private enterprise does, render people better able to afford those taxes which are unavoidable.

(3) By retaining for the State the profit previously accruing to private enterprise, add to the revenue and render taxation and borrowing increasingly unnecessary."

We have had nearly five years of this nationalisation policy with all its experiments which were going to relieve the taxpayers of Queensland and do away with increased taxation, and what do we find? Taxation has gone up by leaps and bounds, and the industries embarked upon have proved a dead failure. When I first came into Parliament the Labour party were in opposition, and they advocated State enterprise, and pointed out the good work the State railways were doing. "Yes," I said on that occasion, "the Liberals can manage the railways because they can discharge a man at any time, and they are not afraid of his vote." But the Government of the present day are dependent on the railway men and other wage-earners for their seats, and they dare not offend them. They dare not discharge railway employees to anything like the extent necessary in order to carry them on successfully. It is all very well to give the railway men an appeal court, but when that appeal court is influenced by some Labour organisation, and when that Labour organisation appeals to the Labour Government and the man who is discharged goes back to the ganger with a note to say he has to take him on again, then the whole control of the system is gone by the board. Just now there are a lot of unemployed, brought about through private enterprise being afraid to invest money, and there is a great number, too, who are unemployable. The unemployable are supporters of the present Government, and they interview the Minister for Railways or somebody else and are immediately foisted on to the Railway Department. The Railway Department has to find positions for them at high wages, and no wonder the Railway Department cannot pay. The older hands in the Railway Department know very well that a time will come when this Government or some other Government will have.

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to go in for retrenchment, and if the Labour Government is in power the old and faithful servants who have borne the heat and burden of the day will be retrenched, while the red-raggers and the unemployable who have been taken in from the street will be kept on.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Who would you sack?

Mr. GUNN: I would not sack anybody if I could help it. I could tell you many things that I would do, but it is not my business to instruct the Government as to what they ought to do. The Premier some time ago issued a pamphlet which has been quoted time after time. Evidently, when he issued that pamphlet he thought he could carry on the State without loan money. One of the planks of the Labour party was not to borrow any money except for reproductive works, but we find they have had to borrow money for all sorts of things other than for reproductive works. This is a Government of borrow, boom, and tax. They used to call us "The borrow, boom, and burst Government." But the Liberal Government did not burst. They left the State in good working order. If you have a good man in charge of your engine, he takes care of the bearings, puts oil on here, puts a little bit of packing there, and the machine is kept in good order. The Liberals handed over the political machine in good running order, but the Labour party neglected to oil it. They neglected it in many ways, and the machine gradually got out of order. In the first two or three years it was not very noticeable, but the time has now come when the political machine is going to break down. The machinery is now out of order, and hon. members opposite will be glad to relinquish its running when their period is

[9 p.m.] up. I am glad the Labour party have another twelve months to run it, because during that time I am quite convinced the whole of their theories will be proved to be only theories and not workable in practice. We have seen extravagance all round. There is the Public Works Commission going all over Queensland and costing the country up to date something like £8,000. They are very estimable men, and their reports may be all right, but what is the good of reporting on railways when you have no money to build railways anywhere? It is an absolute waste of public money. It is a political commission, all the members belonging to one side of the House.

Mr. COLLINS: But their reports are not all one-sided, you must admit.

Mr. GUNN: I have not studied the reports. But I do not care who he is or what he is; if he is a partisan, he must have some partisan feeling.

The PREMIER: Why did not you accept the invitation to have representation on that Commission?

Mr. GUNN: I would not be a party to what I thought was a wrong. I thought it was wrong to appoint a political commission of works. If you are going to have a works commission of any value, it ought to have expert men on it. There ought to be on it the Chief Engineer of Railways, the Chief Engineer of Harbours and Rivers, the Secretary for Public Lands, and men of that kind who understand what they are doing, and who, if they made a mistake, would have to put up with some loss. Political commissions can make all sorts of mistakes,

and cannot be called to account. Then, look at the money that has been spent on pamphlets like "Socialism at work," another called "The Buzzer," and all sorts of political literature for which the people of Queensland have to pay. I do not mind the Labour party having political literature, but they ought to pay for it. I do not see why the Nationalists should pay for political literature for them. Then, another piece of extravagance, I think, was the visit of the Secretary for Railways to America. Why he went there I do not know. He was supposed to have gone there to investigate the railways system. What has been the result of that trip to America? I cannot see that we are any better off than we were before he went away. All he can do is to suggest raising the freights and fares. I remember when the hon. member for Brisbane (Mr. Kirwan) was in opposition he said if he could only get on a commission he would show the Government where they could save £250,000 of money. When the Government got into power they took him at his word, and gave him and another gentleman a commission to investigate the railway works of Queensland. They brought in a report, the gist of which was to raise the freights and fares. That ought to have been sufficient without sending the Secretary for Railways all the way to America to say the same thing.

Mr. KIRWAN: They ought to have sent the commission to America.

Mr. GUNN: It might have been a good deal better. Then, with reference to the loan. The loan, we know, is free from State and Federal income tax. I saw in some of the papers that it is free from probate duty. I do not know how it can be free from probate or some other duty. I got an actuary last year to make out what the income tax of the different States was. Supposing you had an income of £1,000, the total tax, both State and Federal, would be £80 4s. 1d. Supposing you had an income of £2,500, the total of the two taxes would be £379 9s. 6d. Supposing you had an income of £5,000, the taxes would amount to £1,236 16s. Supposing you had an income of £7,500, the joint income tax would be £2,452 11s. 4d. Supposing you had an income of £10,000, the total taxation would be £3,763 18s. 9d. Supposing you had an income of £20,000, your taxation would be £9,030 8s. 9d., equal to about 9s. in the £1. This is the point I want to get at. If you have money to invest, and you can invest it in the Queensland loan at $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. or $6\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., whichever it may be, it is equal to about 12 per cent. in any other industry in the State. No wonder there was a rush to take up the Queensland loan. No one in their senses now will invest money in buying stations or grazing farms. They cannot make 12 per cent. out of it.

Mr. COLLINS: What rot! They are making a lot more.

Mr. GUNN: I will show directly what the State made out of their stations. The tendency of these loans is to withdraw money from profitable investments in Queensland and have it invested in scrip of that nature. No wonder the people have a lot of money in the bank. They do not know what to do with it. If you have money now and want to invest it, what are you going to do with it? There is only one investment worth anything now, and that is Government

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debentures and war loans. Even the Federal Government have got wise as far as that is concerned. The last war loan was subject to income tax. But the holders of this Government's loan are free from both Federal and State income tax. The sellers of these big stations that the Government now hold are going about with their scrip in their pockets free from all these taxes, and are far better off than they would be managing the stations out in the West, and bearing the trouble and worry of droughts and everything else. Is that a fair thing to the rest of the taxpayers of Queensland? We have to make up the deficiency. I have very grave doubts about this loan. It was suggested to me by a banker that very likely the reason it was so readily subscribed was that on a great many of the loans floated in England interest has to be paid, and they thought this State Government was so far behind that if they did not lend them money they would not have any money with which to pay interest.

The PREMIER: I will show you the weakness of that argument. The bulk of the loan was subscribed by small people, not by large capitalists.

Mr. GUNN: The way they do it in Great Britain is, they go to an agent and say, "I have £500 which I wish to invest in the best security you can get." It is not the little man at all; it is the little man's money, but the big agent does the whole of the business. And that agent took the Queensland loan because it was free from those taxes and it was perhaps a better investment than some of the others.

The PREMIER: Of course, it was; because it was an investment in Queensland under a Labour Government.

Mr. GUNN: Queensland, with all its beautiful country, ought to be able to offer a loan at less than any other part of the world instead of more.

Mr. COLLINS: It would be if it were not for some of your speeches that have been circulated.

Mr. GUNN: Speech after speech has been delivered at the Trades Hall here advocating the repudiation of war loans. One man got up in the Trades Hall and said, "Never mind. We will not repudiate the loans, but we will not pay the interest." I would like to know what is the difference—they have got your money and they are going to pay no interest on it. They say, "Down with the capitalist and the people who have got money," and yet when they get hard up they rush about asking them to lend them money. I am taking this seriously, because the Labour party have been running this State for a considerable time, and I am afraid that, just as Mr. Lane who went to South America was for years held up as an example of the failure of socialism, so Queensland is going to be held up for all time as a frightful example of socialistic enterprise.

Then this wonderful Government talk about the producers. They say they would like to do this for the man on the land, and they would like to do that. What have they done for him? If you look at your own agricultural reports you will find that over 6,000 people fewer were employed last year than the year before on dairying and agricultural farms alone. Where are they going?

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They do not get away out of Australia, and I do not suppose they are the unemployed. They come to the cities and take the positions of wharf lumpers and others, because they are better workers than the men who have been reared and nurtured in the cities. The consequence is that somebody else is out of a job. No wonder we have unemployed! What have the Government done for the producers? They have raised his rent. They have put on a land tax. Those are both things to help him along. They have raised his railway rates two or three times. They have raised his income tax—another thing to help him along. They charge 6 per cent. on the price of his seed wheat, whilst the storekeeper gives him seed wheat and lets the payment stand over until the crops ripen. The Government make him sign a most absurd document. He has to divulge his private affairs and give them a security over everything he possesses and pay 6 per cent. in addition. The Government buy corn at 9s. and retail it to the farmer at 15s. Under a Liberal Government we used to get a rebate of 3½ per cent. of railway freights on starving stock. That is abolished now, and all we get is a rebate for a few weeks or months, but we have to pay the whole of the rates, and the whole of the increased rates. Then they commandeer the settler's meat. They do not allow him to send his stock over the border to New South Wales. All these are ways of encouraging the farmer. When Labour took office in 1915 the direct taxation—and direct taxation nearly always falls on the producer—was 28s. 2d. per head. In 1916 they had raised it to 42s. 9d., in 1917 to 46s. 9d., in 1918 to 52s. 2d., and in 1919 to 80s. By these new-fangled scientific taxation Bills they are going to raise it another 20s., which will make the burden 100s. per head in direct taxation. That is not assistance to the man on the land.

Now, I want to touch on State enterprise, because the keystone of the policy of the Labour party, the battle cry of socialism, is State enterprise; everybody under socialism was to do a fair share and nobody was to do an unfair share. We were to distribute the good things of this world equitably, and we were all to be far happier. What is the result? Chaos and unemployment and all sorts of other things. When the Government took possession of the railways they were a paying concern; last year the loss was £1,418,473. Under the Denham Government the average earnings per employee was £102 11s. 11d.; now they have decreased to £17 3s. 9d. In New South Wales the railways earn 3s. per train mile, the Victorian railways earn 3s. 3d., the Queensland railways 7d. Is that not a terrible difference? The revenue of the railways increased from July, 1914, to July, 1919, by 9 per cent.; the expenditure by 56 per cent., during the same period. The train miles decreased by 2,000,000; the number of permanent employees increased by 33 per cent. If that is not a frightful example of railway management, I do not know what is. The Minister for Railways was sent to America and England to find out how to manage railways. He was interviewed in London, as reported in the "Standard" of 1st August, 1919:—

"These were the words of Mr. J. A. Fihelly, the Queensland Minister for

Railways, in an interview with the London 'Daily Herald' representative just before he left England. 'And is it possible to run fast trains without competition?' Mr. Fihelly was asked. 'Don't you lead me on to brag,' he replied, with a smile, 'but the truth is that our railways can give points not only to yours but to America's'. The excellence of our railways is partly due to the eight-hour system.'

Do hon. members think for one moment that our railways are superior to the English or American railways?

Then, again, time after time the present Agent-General, Mr. Hunter, used to move a resolution about reducing railway freights and fares. On one occasion, as reported in "Hansard" of the 28th October, 1914, page 1563, he said—

"Again, I contend that the incidence of taxation is not fair—that it falls on a section of the community, and that is borne out by a review of the freights charged on our railways. Fully 15 per cent. is added to the cost of living of rural residents compared with city residents, and the investments and enterprises of the State with regard to railways should not be borne by those who reside at long distances from the cities, and if no other course can be adopted, then the zone system should be inaugurated."

On another occasion either he or one of his late colleagues in the Ministry moved the adjournment of the House to call attention to the high fares and freights. When they got into power, in the first Financial Statement of the Labour party in 1915—page 1273 of "Hansard"—the Treasurer said—

"The return have been abolished, and the single fares have been reduced by 4 per cent. This does not apply to fares and season tickets in the suburban areas, or to workmen's weekly tickets. The long distance season ticket rates for commercial travellers and others have also been revised. There has been a revision of the rates charged for the carriage of parcels, and a revision of freights, varying from 2½ per cent. to 10 per cent. on previous rates on wool, produce, coal, coke, minerals, general merchandise, and on other goods; and from 5 per cent. to 20 per cent. on live stock and log timber, the rates for which have been exceptionally low. In revising the freights, due consideration has been given to people residing in the interior."

I do not know what "due consideration" they ever got, but that is what the Treasurer said. In the next Financial Statement, in 1916—page 1432 of "Hansard"—the Treasurer said—

"The railways are expected to earn £184,000 more than they earned last year. About £80,000 of this amount will be due to the adjustment of rates which have been decided on."

In 1917—page 1402 of "Hansard"—the Treasurer said, in his Financial Statement—

"The railway revenue is expected to increase by £152,000. This includes £50,000 which is expected to be derived from a 10 per cent. increase in the freight on live stock, wool, and minerals, which will operate from 1st October."

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That is their own statement; I do not know what other increases they have put on.

I believe it was the custom in olden times when the newspaper reporters went to a Minister, for him to invite them into his office and give them whatever information he thought fit. I understand that Ministers at the present time have not got time to be interviewed by the reporters, and they have statements typewritten which they hand to the reporters. That is a very good idea. Evidently, the statement I am going to read was one of those typewritten statements, because I noticed it appeared in identical words in the different Brisbane papers. The "Daily Mail" of 10th December, 1919, contained this statement—

"RAILWAY FARES—NO INCREASES.

"There has been a belief in certain quarters that the Government intend to increase railway rates and fares, and especially those on suburban lines, after the elections. This rumour was emphatically denied by the Minister for Railways (Mr. Fihelly) yesterday."

"We prefer to give the people in the country a fair deal," Mr. Fihelly said. "This Government has not raised freights and fares to speak of during the last four and a-half years of office, and has no intention of doing so. We could have a surplus to-morrow if we followed that policy. We prefer to have a deficit and not to increase fares or freights."

The hon. gentleman gave another statement to the "Daily Mail" on the same day—

"IT'S A LIE.

"RUMOURED SUPER TAX.

"It may not be a malicious lie, or a deliberate lie, but it certainly is a lie. I will give it the benefit of the doubt," said Mr. Fihelly yesterday when questioned in reference to a statement appearing in a Brisbane paper to the effect that the Government intended to impose a super tax of 25 per cent. on incomes."

The "Courier" of the same date—10th December last—contained this statement—

"BUDGET AND GAP.

"MR. FIELLY'S STATEMENT.

"The statement given by the 'Courier' yesterday that a rumour was current in well-informed Labour circles that one reason why the Budget was not submitted before the House rose was that the caucus intended to impose a super tax of 25 per cent. on incomes, was denied by the Acting Premier yesterday."

"The attention of the Minister was also directed to a persistent rumour, that it is intended, after the elections, to impose a 30 per cent. increase on rates and fares, but this also he denied. The Government, he said, had 'not raised fares and freights to speak of during the last four and a-half years of office, and it had no intention of doing so. It would have a surplus to-morrow if it followed that policy,' he continued, and added, 'We prefer to have a deficit and not to increase fares and freights.' This matter was also submitted to the Commissioner, who replied that he had no information on the matter."

In the face of such statements where is our

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public morality? Where is the veracity of our public men? Why should we cloak the matter? The Federal elections were coming on, but there was no occasion to say anything; but, when deliberate statements of that sort are made and we afterwards find they are untrue, we lose faith in the people who make those statements.

I will now leave the railways; there are plenty of other hon. members who will have something to say about the terrible state our railways are getting into. We must remember that Canada and the United States of America were built up by private railways, and Great Britain too. The men who work on those privately-owned railways are just as satisfied as the men who are working on our Queensland State-owned railways. The men who are working on the privately-owned tramways in this city are just as happy as those who are working on our State railways, and they are some of the best employees in this State. They have no fear of victimisation because of their political beliefs or unbeliefs; but in the State railway service there are all sorts of discontent. I do not suppose I shall live to see it, but the time will come when our railways will be let, or leased, or sold to private companies. The Government of the day may fix the fares and freights, but under private management the railways will give passengers more comfort and consideration, and the workmen will get on better and have better conditions than they now have under the system of political patronage.

Mr. WEIR: Is that what your party stand for—selling the railways?

Mr. GUNN: The next matter I wish to deal with are the State butchers' shops. We are informed that the net profit for the year is £36,998 0s. 4d.—a profit of ½d. per lb. Considering that they get their meat at 3d. and 3½d. per lb., while private butchers have to give ever so much more and the Imperial Government have to pay 4½d. per lb., if the State shops cannot show a better profit than ½d. per lb., then it is a sorry state of affairs. We are told that the average price charged over the counter is about 5d. per lb. As they commandeer the meat at 3d. and 3½d. per lb., it will be seen that it costs the customer nearly 100 per cent. more. There was an agreement entered into between the meat companies and the Government. I think the pastoralists and graziers should have been consulted, but they were not consulted, and the Government made a contract with the meat companies, and raised the price of meat to the Imperial Government to 4½d., but took it for themselves at 3½d. The contract was about to run out, and the Premier asked some of the graziers and meatworks the other day for a renewal of the agreement for another five years. The agreement was for the period of the war and three months afterwards, which is up in about March. Then he made a stipulation that he would not take less than 20,000 tons of meat a year, for a period of five years. The graziers and meat companies could not agree to that, in the face of the drought we were going through. No meatworks can fix the quantity of meat; an arrangement must be on a percentage basis. But why should there be a percentage basis even? Why should we not have the world's market for our meat, as well as for anything else? I do not want the people of Queensland to go short of meat. The wage-earner

has the world for his market, and can sell his labour in China, Kamschatka, or anywhere else he likes. I notice he is not rushing to Russia, but he could go there if he liked. The "Standard" says that it is the ideal country in the world. They could rush over and join the Bolsheviks, but they prefer to stop here. I think the graziers should have the world's market for their produce as well as anybody else.

Mr. COLLINS: Do you say we should accept the world's market for sugar?

Mr. GUNN: I am not sure whether we should not accept the world's market for sugar. You must remember that when you are talking about the supply of meat you are not alluding to a few graziers. There are about 40,000 cattle-owners in Queensland owning 300 head of cattle. When you are commanding meat you are taking it from everybody. You are taking it away from the little man as well as the big man.

Mr. COLLINS: That is too thin.

Mr. MORGAN: It is true. You are affecting the price of all the cattle in Queensland.

Mr. GUNN: The Premier, when speaking in North Queensland, said it was a very reasonable demand on the part of the Government to require 20,000

[9.30 p.m.] tons per annum, considering that the graziers could sell their surplus product overseas at 7d. per lb. But we have to compete with the world; meat is getting stored up at the other end of the world, and I am very doubtful whether we will get 4½d. per lb. How could we contract to sell 20,000 tons of meat to this Government when our contract with the Imperial Government does not fall in till March next? We will have to keep on supplying it at 4½d., and the Government will be taking it at 5d. all the time. Mr. Fihelly, when up North, said the cattle men of Queensland owned 10,000,000 head of cattle, but that is a rash statement. The cattle amount to 5,786,744, or about half of what the hon. gentleman said. Then, again, how do the Government make the profit which they are talking about? They stated that they had stored a lot of meat for the Federal Government, but, when everything was wound up, it appeared that there was no storage charges due at all. By that transaction our Government collared £19,000 that did not belong to them. The Auditor-General's report on that question is very interesting. On page 9 of his report on State industrial undertakings for 1917, it is stated—

"Regarding the amount of £19,627 8s. 4d. shown above as having been received from the Commonwealth Government, I find from the correspondence submitted in reference thereto, that it represents payment by that Government of this State's claim for storage charges from 31st December, 1916, to 31st March, 1917, on all frozen meat held in store to order of the Commonwealth Government."

Another paragraph states—

"As no payment was made by the State butchers' shops to the meat companies on this behalf, the amount remains as a credit to profit and loss account."

Now, I want to come to the State stations. We are told what wonderful profits are being made on these stations. I took the trouble to ask one of the principal actuaries in Brisbane, who makes a speciality of income tax return intricacies, for his opinion on this

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matter, and I have got his reply in writing, which I will read to the Committee—

“RE STATE STATIONS.

“In answer to your request that I should give you a general statement tending to show what the actual profit to the State has been during the financial year 1918-19 from the carrying on of the State stations, taking into account those items of expenditure which, by reason of their State ownership, the stations have not been called upon to pay, I have to state as follows:—

“Before, however, going into the actual questions raised, I want to point out that, by reason of the fact that the Trade Commissioner has valued the stock on hand ‘in accordance with the usual practice adopted by pastoralists,’ he has added to his actual trading profit no less than a sum of £10,042. He admits that as at 1st July, 1918, there were included in the stock on hand 13,800 calves still unbranded and valued at £1 10s. each. If these be deleted from his opening figures for the year 1918-19, and assuming that the deaths during the year amounted to no more than 3 per cent. on the total number, there were on hand at 1st July, 1918, adding the purchased stock at purchase price, deducting sales and deaths at average cost, and including the 13,800 and such other calves as were branded during the year at the average cost price of £3 per head, the opening stock would be 112,667 head at £572.748. and closing stock 168,665 head at £792.725, thus showing a gross increase in value of £219,977. The published accounts show a gross increase of £230,019, or a difference of £10,042.

“The net profit, as shown by the accounts, is thus inflated by at least £10,042, simply by reason of the fact that at least this amount has been added on account of an estimated increase in market value. Of course, this increase may be realised, but then, again, it may not, and in view of the present conditions the probabilities are against such realisation.

“In addition, it must be noted that no amount whatever for direct taxation, either Federal or State, has been paid, nor does it appear that any rates, taxes, and workers' compensation and other insurance have been paid beyond £49 10s. 3d. stock assessment and £174 19s. 3d. insurance. The workers' compensation insurance alone, at an average of £1 5s. per cent. on station wages only, would amount to £300.

“Turning now to the question of taxation—assuming that the figures as per profit and loss accounts were accepted without alteration by both Federal and State Income Tax Departments, and that each station was individually owned, the direct charges would be—

	£	s.	d.
State stations income tax	7,091	19	2
Federal income tax after deducting State income tax	15,283	12	0
Federal land tax	4,001	10	10
Municipal rates, on an average of 4d. in £1 on twenty times the rent	3,580	0	0
	£29,957	2	0

so that the net profit of £43,975 is thus reduced to £14,018, 1s. 10d.

“The Auditor-General's report shows that at the 30th June, 1919, the State stations account was indebted as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
To the Loan Fund	470,038	5	9
To Trust Fund	560,454	0	11

Or a total of ... £1,030,492 6 8

“Interest has been charged to the stations' accounts on an average amount of £792,600 for the year. While it might be admitted that this interest will approximately meet the interest which the Government has to pay, it must not be forgotten that, by reason of the fact that interest paid by the Government attracts neither State nor Federal income tax, the revenues of this State and of the Commonwealth (so far as this State is concerned) have suffered to the extent of another £8,000 at least.

“It will therefore be readily seen that the people of this State have had no material benefit whatever from the State manership of stations. In this connection it is also particularly worthy of note that of 11,384 head of cattle sold during the year no more than 704 were sold to the State butcheries, and these were sold at an average price of £9 10s. per head. It is also to be remarked that the Auditor-General's reports refer to 1,575 head of cattle ‘said to have been on the road.’ ”

That is the actuary's statement. It will get into “Hansard” and the Treasurer will have an opportunity of criticising it and pulling it to pieces in any way he thinks fit. I make out the total this way: The income tax, shire rates, and land tax on State stations would amount to £29,957. The loss through payments in debentures being free from tax amounts to £8,000, and the deductions for unbranded calves totals £10,042. That makes a total of £47,999. The net profit as per the Auditor-General's report is £43,975. That shows a net loss in the management of the State stations of £4,024. I found also that the Government only paid 7s. 2d. per square mile rent, while the average for other stations is 18s. 11½d. per square mile. The stock assessments should be 4s. per 100 cattle, equal to, say, £377, in place of the £49 10s. 3d. which the Government pay. The insurance is also underpaid. The Government pay no Rabbit Board rates, which is a heavy item. They have no interest on rabbit netting to pay, they do not pay any license for licensed gates, and they do not pay the marsupial or dingo taxes, which are heavy items. There is no license to sell tobacco. The Government do not belong to any graziers' association. The State stations are scab stations. They do not subscribe to the Pastoralists' Association. They are very glad to receive any benefits which the State awards give. I think I have proved conclusively that the State stations are not paying. They were bought on a rising market and there is no reason why they should not pay. They have not overpaid their men, and they use aborigines like anyone else. The Government have not built many houses for the men to live in, and they have not spent as much in improvements as they ought to have done.

Mr. Gunn.]

If they ran the stations in the same way as private people are compelled to run them, they would have shown a considerable loss. In other industries they show a similar result.

Mr. COLLINS: How do we know that those figures are correct? Are they signed by a certificated man?

Mr. GUNN: You will see them in "Hansard."

Mr. COLLINS: Who signed them?

Mr. GUNN: I will sign them.

Mr. COLLINS: Of course you will, but I will not accept your word.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why don't you pay your taxes the same as other people?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GUNN: With regard to the sawmills, they refuse to supply fruit cases. They will not give us any timber, and at the same time they are sending timber to New South Wales.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: We are doing nothing of the kind.

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

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): I cannot allow the debate on this Financial Statement to close without having something to say on it. When the Government delayed the introduction of the Financial Statement we knew they were afraid of something and that they wanted to hide something. We quite realised that there was something to hide. There was also a Federal election coming along, and the Government knew that it would embarrass them in that fight if they produced the Financial Statement and showed to what state they had brought the affairs of Queensland. The Treasurer himself stated that good government meant good finance, and out of his own mouth this Government stands condemned. During the past few years since they have been in office they have accumulated deficits every year. They increased the taxation and obtained an increased revenue, but despite that fact we still have deficits staring us in the face. It is proposed to raise further taxation to the extent of over £1,000,000 from the taxpayers of Queensland during the next financial year. The Government made the excuse that there was a war on, which upset the finances. But this Government has not spent a great deal of money in the prosecution of the war or in the settlement of soldiers. They have not involved themselves in any great amount, so that does not account for the financial embarrassment of the present Government. I know they floated a loan in London and the Government are proud of the fact that the loan was oversubscribed by about £2,000,000. That does not show confidence in the present Government at all. Why did not the Government produce their Financial Statement before they went on the London market? If the financiers of London found that this Government repudiated their contracts, the loan would not have been oversubscribed. They did not think that the Government would repudiate the contracts they entered into, and that they would tack it on to a money Bill, as they are doing on this occasion. We know very well that the Council cannot amend that Bill, and that they will have to pass it in toto or reject it in toto. They cannot amend a money Bill, as all hon. members know, and they will

have to pass the Bill or reject it, and that is not a very fair thing to ask the Council to do. When the present Government came into power, we were led to believe that they were the friends of the workers, and that the millenium was close at hand, that we would have a contented people, and that they would have more money to spend. But the fact is that, though wages have been increased, there has been more industrial unrest in Queensland under this Government than under any other Government we have had in the State, and more unrest than there has been in any other part of Australia.

Mr. CARTER: That is not true

Mr. BELL: It is absolutely true. When the present Government came into power we were told that industrial difficulties would be settled, and that we should have a contented body of workers in the State. The matter of industrial unrest is one that has been engaging the attention of a great many minds, not only in Queensland and Australia, but right throughout the world.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: There is greater unrest in England than there is in this country.

Mr. CARTER: There have been more strikes and losses in the other States than there have been in Queensland.

Mr. BELL: I do not think that is the case. In 1913 we had seventeen industrial disputes in Queensland; and in 1918 we had eighty-four.

Mr. CARTER: How about the other States? There was more industrial unrest in the other States.

Mr. BELL: I cannot give the figures for the other States, but the hon. member can look up "Knibbs" for himself, and give the figures to the Committee. No one will object to a fair day's wage being paid for a fair day's work, but our experience has been, especially among Government employees, that workers do not always give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Such conditions cannot continue. It does not matter what a man is paid, whether 10s. or £1 per day, so long as he gives a fair return for the wage he receives.

Mr. WEIR: You don't know of your own knowledge that the worker does not give a fair return for the wage he receives?

Mr. BELL: I do not know of my own knowledge, but I know that that is what is generally stated, and I have had some experience of the matter in my own district, where some public buildings have been erected. During the progress of erection many things in connection with those buildings have been cut out and cheaper things substituted. That has happened in my own district with reference to schools, and the same kind of thing is going on right throughout Queensland.

Mr. CARTER: Does not that apply to contractors, too?

Mr. BELL: I do not know that it does. Again, I would point out that since the present Government came into power there has been more unemployment in Queensland than at any other time, and that this unemployment is on the increase. I know that the Government are blaming the dry weather for the unemployment.

Mr. CARTER: Don't you think that the drought causes unemployment?

[Mr. Gunn.]

Mr. BELL: It does to some extent; but the action of the Government is such that there is no stability and confidence in the country, and that causes unemployment, so that the Government are responsible. The Government have not carried out their promises in several respects.

Mr. CARTER: What promise have the Government broken?

Mr. BELL: They have broken several promises. I do not think it is a fair thing for the Government to shirk responsibility in the way they have been doing. In connection with their loan policy they propose to lend money to shire councils to carry out road building and other necessary work, but they have handed over their responsibilities in many cases to shire councils. This is especially the case in connection with hospitals. Shire councils are made responsible for dealing with any outbreak of an epidemic, and this has led to the serious embarrassment of many hospitals in country districts. The money which is lent to shire councils for dealing with epidemics has to be paid back, and the property owners in the district have to find all the money to pay interest and redemption. In New South Wales the shire councils have control of the roads, but many years ago the Government constructed all the main roads, and then handed them over to the shire councils, and gave them a subsidy towards the maintenance of those roads. In Queensland the shire councils have to make roads and build bridges, and they get no assistance from the Government. That is not a fair thing.

Mr. CARTER: They give the shire councils power to tax the property-owners in order to get money.

Mr. BELL: Yes, but that power of taxation is limited, and the capacity of the people to pay taxes is also limited.

One of the most unjust proposals of the Government is that with regard to the increase in pastoral rents. Under the 1910

Land Act many of the pastoralists [10 p.m.] surrendered their leases and took out fresh leases, and when they did that they thought they had a clear lease for a certain term. That is the great advantage with a lease, because the lessee knows how to put his improvements down. He wants a certain term, as he wants to borrow money from the financial institutions to enable him to develop his country so as to enable it to carry more stock.

Mr. CARTER: Have wool and meat not increased in price?

Mr. BELL: Certainly they have.

Mr. CARTER: Then why should they not pay increased rents?

Mr. BELL: That doesn't make any difference to the question of breaking a contract. A contract, once entered into, should be carried out by the Government. If the Labour Government entered into a contract with a body of unionists, they would stick to it, and not seek to repudiate it in the contemptible way they are seeking to repudiate these contracts. This is the only Government in the British Empire that has committed such an act of repudiation.

I would now like to turn to that "white elephant" known as the railways. We have

invested in our railways a sum of £42,000,000, which is producing about 15s. 9d. per cent.

Mr. BRENNAN: The drought is the cause of that.

Mr. BELL: The drought is not the cause.

Mr. BRENNAN: Do you say that seriously?

Mr. BELL: I do. The hon. member knows very well that the Arbitration Court granted increased wages to the railway men, and he also knows that the department is absolutely overstaffed and probably by supporters of his who were out of a job.

Mr. BRENNAN: Does not a drought affect the railways?

Mr. BELL: Certainly it does to an extent, but not to this extent.

Mr. WHITFORD: Do you object to the increased wages?

Mr. BELL: Certainly not. What I complain about is that there are too many employees on the railways. They are losing nearly a million and a-half a year, and they have lost three millions and a-half since this Government came into power. With the increased freights and fares the Treasurer has told us that he expects to get £140,000, and still have a deficit of £1,300,000. I know the Government have increased the fares and freights all round, but a little while ago they increased the freights and fares on country lines. They made the unfortunate man who is suffering from drought bear the burden. No fares were increased in city and suburban areas where the people have the best of conditions and have every means of transport.

Mr. BRENNAN: Did the banks assist these men in the country?

Mr. BELL: The banks do assist them a great deal more than the Government does.

Mr. WHITFORD: And they increased the rate of interest.

Mr. BELL: I do not think it would be a very wise policy on the part of the Government to build any more lines. We know we have a roving commission travelling all over Queensland, and what good are they going to do? They have brought in various reports and we know very well that the Government have no money to go on with their proposals. The Commission are having a jolly good time at the country's expense, and the reports that they bring in are absolutely useless. They are pigeon-holed and probably will never be looked at. There is one thing I would like to advocate and that is the completion of a line which has already been passed by Parliament. I refer to the line to Mount Edwards. Some little time ago the Premier was up there, and we had a deputation to him, and he promised that that line would be gone on with, but no start has yet been made.

Mr. WHITFORD: You have vested interests there?

Mr. BELL: No.

The PREMIER: You know the reason—absence of material.

Mr. BELL: I would like to point out that the rails and sleepers were already on the ground, but they were carted away by the Government. Fortunately they had some sense of decency, because the residents of that district told me that the trains were run.

Mr. Bell.]

at night as the Government were ashamed to run them in the day time. I notice that the Premier has just stated that there is a shortage of material, but I would like an assurance from him that as soon as material is available the line will be gone on with. Some little time ago we had to bring a deputation from that district down to the Minister, because we heard they were going to steal the buildings as well. All the buildings have been completed and the earthworks and bridging too, and it will cost a good deal of money to put those earthworks into repair again, and the longer it is left the more it will cost. Those buildings in good seasons will be subject to the risk of fire, and it would be good policy on the part of the Government to complete this line, and make it a paying proposition. Many farmers in that district are anxious to increase their areas under cultivation, but they do not like to do so, because they are some 20 miles from a railway, and as everyone knows it is a very great handicap to carry agricultural produce over 20 miles of road which is not in the very best of condition either.

There is another matter that I would like to bring under the notice of the Committee, and that is how necessary it is to encourage production. We know that because of the great war Australia has accumulated a big national debt which will have to be paid, and we have no hope of paying it unless we increase our production. To do that certain provision has to be made for a dry time such as we have just gone through. We have in the Mount Edwards district a splendid site for a water conservation scheme. I noticed a little while ago that there were only three weeks' supply of water available for Brisbane and many people went short.

Mr. KIRWAN: They will have to go to Mount Edwards eventually for the Brisbane supply.

Mr. BELL: They will. It is a natural site and the Government should take advantage of it. It would be beautiful water, quite suitable for domestic and agricultural purposes, but I would hesitate to advise the farmers of that district to go in for the scheme solely for irrigation purposes, because the cost will be fairly great. The reservoir would hold a great many million gallons of water which probably would not be required for irrigation purposes, and to make the scheme a complete success, some large city would have to come in and use the water and thereby assist the farmers in the irrigation area to pay the interest and redemption. Under the proposal there would be no need for costly pumping, as the water could be brought down to Brisbane by gravitation. The Treasurer himself paid a visit to that site, and I am sure he was greatly impressed with the possibilities there. At the present time, a survey is being completed of this area, and I trust it will be found entirely satisfactory. We must realise that in Queensland, and in Australia, we are subject to dry spells, and in what better way could any Government spend money than in providing for water conservation and in ensuring a good supply of water for their cities and for agricultural and irrigation purposes? (Hear, hear!) I would like to touch for one moment upon State enterprises, and I would like to say here, too, that the Government could probably spend money

to much greater advantage to the country, for the development of Queensland, in conserving water than in some of the State enterprises in which they already have invested money. I have been dealing in station properties for a good number of years, and some of the purchases made by the Government, although made on a rising market, are not going to be good propositions. Take Keeroongooloo, for which they paid £140,000. It is recognised as one of the worst runs in Queensland, and it has broken every person and every company that ever has owned it. Yet the Government step in, in face of a drought, and pay £140,000 for it. I could mention several other places, but that will suffice to show how public money has been expended.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mention the other places.

Mr. BELL: There is Wando Vale, for instance, and others, which were not good propositions. I do not think any private individual would pay the price which the Government paid. What about Mount Hutton, too? No one has any objection to the Government owning stations, but I think it is a very unfair thing for the Government to buy stations and make a money-making proposition of it. When they bought those stations they said, "We want to get State stations to supply our butchers' shops." But what has been the experience? Very few of those cattle have found their way into the State shops. They have been sold to the Imperial Government, and this Government have used them as a means of raising money and increasing their revenue. Also, they have sold them to New South Wales, and I believe one lot was sold to South Australia as well.

Mr. D. RYAN: Do you object to supplying meat to the Imperial Government?

Mr. BELL: No, certainly not. But why should the Government say they bought those stations to supply their shops, and then sell elsewhere? The State Government commandeered meat from the pastoralists and stockowners of Queensland at from 3d. to 3½d. when that meat could have been sold to the Imperial Government at 4½d. It would have brought money into Queensland. I think it was an injustice to the stockowners of Queensland to commandeer their meat at such a price. I might say that that was not, as we heard the late Premier say, making the pastoralists squeal. It does not hit the big owners of stock only, but it hits the smaller men too. The man who has a few head of stock on his dairy farm or selection has to accept the lowest price for it, and probably it has taken the bread out of his mouth. Those State stations are not paying any rates and taxes to the shire councils or to the Government, and they are losing revenue in that direction. I am pleased to have had these few words on this Financial Statement. I am sorry the Government saw fit to delay its presentation, but I think they have had sufficient condemnation from the people of Queensland and of Australia in the recent election. (Hear, hear!)

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

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

[Mr. Bell.