

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 14 JANUARY 1920

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 14 JANUARY, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

SEED WHEAT FOR FARMERS.

Mr. GRAYSON (*Cunningham*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

“Is it the intention of the Government to secure seed wheat for farmers in the wheat areas for the next wheat planting season?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

“The Government is collecting all possible information regarding supplies and requirements for next wheat planting, and if it is found that Government action is necessary to prevent gristing of wheat required for seed, such action will be taken.”

ANZAC DAY HOLIDAY.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked the Premier—

“Will he take the necessary steps to make Anzac Day a public holiday, and by so doing fittingly commemorate the event which the day represents, and thus establish a precedent which, no doubt, the other States will follow?”

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

“This matter has already received my serious consideration, but the difficulties which presented themselves precluded the suggestion made by the hon. member being put into effect. These difficulties arise from the fact that St. George's Day (i.e., the 23rd April) is already a statutory holiday, and so recognised in most of the industrial awards and agreements; and, secondly, the view is held by certain members of the Anzac Commemoration Committee that if a public holiday were proclaimed, Anzac Day would develop into a day of jubilation and amusement, rather than a day of religious observance, which it is intended to be. However, I will take the opportunity of further considering and discussing the matter with the Anzac Commemoration Committee.”

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MINISTERS.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*), in the absence of Mr. Morgan, asked the Premier—

“What was the amount paid or incurred by the State in respect of the travelling expenses of each individual member of the Ministry during the year ended 30th June, 1919, and the year ended 30th June, 1915?”

The PREMIER replied—

“This information will be compiled.”

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MR. T. J. RYAN AND MR. DENHAM.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*), in the absence of Mr. Morgan, asked the Premier—

“What is the total amount of travelling expenses paid, or to be paid, by the

State in respect of Mr. T. J. Ryan's various visits to the Southern and Western States and to Europe during the twelve months ended 30th June last, the figures to include expenses of the whole of the party; also similar information with respect to Mr. Denham for the twelve months ended 30th June, 1915?"

The PREMIER replied—

"This information will take some time to compile, but I would point out to the hon. member that there were two Ministries in office during the twelve months ending 30th June, 1915."

WORK ON LONGREACH-WINTON RAILWAY.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"There being a number of unemployed in and around Longreach, will he endeavour to have work resumed on the Longreach-Winton railway construction for the purpose of giving employment to the said unemployed?"

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

"There is very little earthwork on this railway, and the laying of rails and sleepers cannot be proceeded with until the bridge over the Thomson River is finished. It is well in hand, and is being pushed on as quickly as possible, but will not be completed for about two months."

STATE BUTCHERS' SHOPS AT LONGREACH.

Mr. PAYNE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"When do the Government intend to start State butcher shops in Longreach?"

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

"When the establishment of the shops at present being arranged for is completed, consideration will be given to other centres in the State, including Longreach."

RELEASE OF PRISONER CHAPMAN.

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

"1. Has the man Chapman, imprisoned in connection with the looting during the recent Townsville riots, been released?"

"2. If so, upon what grounds was he freed from prison, and upon whose recommendation?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Full particulars will be given when the Estimates are before the House."

PRICKLY-PEAR SELECTIONS FORFEITED.

Mr. GUNN (*Carnarvon*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"How many prickly-pear selections have been forfeited by the holders during the years 1915, 1916, 1917, 1918, and 1919, respectively?"

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

"1915, 235; 1916, 261; 1917, 209; 1918, 250; 1919, 319."

ORDERS FOR ARSENIC FROM STATE MINE.

Mr. THOMPSON (*Wide Bay*), in the absence of Mr. Peterson, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Is it a fact that the Lands Department are unable to fulfil any further orders for arsenic for the destruction of prickly-pear?"

"2. If it is not a fact, what is the reason that many orders received by the Department have not been fulfilled?"

"3. Can any idea be given as to when it is likely that arsenic can be procured from his Department?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1, 2, and 3. Owing to the scarcity of water at the mine the production was somewhat diminished. The whole of the arsenic produced has been distributed. The Mines Department proposes to add to its plant at the mine, and hopes thereby to be able to supply all requirements."

LOANS FOR PURCHASE OF DAIRY STOCK.

Mr. THOMPSON, in the absence of Mr. Peterson, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"When will his Department be prepared to receive applications for, and grant loans to enable settlers to purchase dairy stock under the provisions of the measure passed some time ago?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

"The draft regulations have now been finalised, and will be gazetted without delay, when forms of application will be available."

DIFFERENT UNIONS IN RAILWAY SERVICE.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Has his attention been drawn to the report of a meeting of the Trades Hall Council at which a delegation from the Queensland Railway Union claimed that the Railway Department was giving preference to one union over other unions of service employees?"

"2. What action by the Department forms the basis of this complaint?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1."

DISCHARGED SOLDIERS' SELECTIONS SURRENDERED.

Mr. FRY asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"What was the total number of soldiers who, during the year 1919, surrendered the holdings they acquired under the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"Twenty-eight."

PAPERS.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Statements of certain insurance companies.

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

Regulation dated 8th January, 1920, under the Diseases in Plants Act of 1916.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

APPROPRIATION BILL.

The PREMIER, in moving—

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

said: The intention of the motion is to enable us to get the Appropriation Bill through in time to permit of the payments being made which are due. It will be necessary to get the measure through the Council this week, and therefore the position does not allow the normal course to be followed under the Standing Orders of giving prior notice and passing the Bill through its stages in the ordinary way. Under the circumstances, I am sure the leader of the Opposition will see the reasonableness of the motion. The Supply Bill, as I can explain later, will provide for Supply up till the end of February, by which time it is hoped that the business of the session will be completed and the final Supply Bill passed.

Mr. MACARTNEY (*Toowong*): This resolution is becoming more fashionable than ever. It is now something like the fourth time during the currency of the present session that we have had a resolution somewhat on these lines. In the earlier resolutions, or some of them, the Premier made a point of the fact that the suspension was limited to the receipt of resolutions on the same day on which they had passed Committee, but that course has not been followed on this occasion, and we are asked to suspend the Standing Orders to the extent of going the whole distance. The only reason that the hon. member has given, in addition, of course, to the ordinary reason in regard to the need for providing money for the public service, is that he hopes the session will be ended by the end of February. The hon. member so far has not taken the House into his confidence as to what remains to be done, and I think the House is entitled to that information. In connection with proceeding with all stages of the Bill in one day, this side, at all events, are under a difficulty in discussing such matters as Supply for the want of perhaps full information of certain subjects, and I trust that the hon. member will take the House into his confidence with respect, for instance, to the loan provisions to be made for carrying out the business of the State for a little time ahead. The hon. member has very frequently complained of criticism from this side of the House in regard to the Government's financial arrangements, and has suggested that criticism is more likely to be damaging to the State than otherwise. I feel, if there is anything in that point, that

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it is very largely due to the fact that the hon. member does not take the House into his confidence to that extent which he ought to do. He should put all his cards on the table, give us the fullest information, and if he does so he will find that no member on this side will risk taking any action that will prejudice his financial arrangements. I trust that the hon. member will indicate now, before the resolution goes through, that information such as I have indicated will be given when we come to the resolutions.

The PREMIER: I can only speak again by way of reply.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member can indicate satisfactorily to the House by way of interjection, and probably he can confirm that interjection when he comes to make his reply. It is the absence of information that leads, perhaps, to criticism of an objectionable character—that is to say, if we had information there would, perhaps, not be so much cause for it.

The PREMIER: The information you ask for about the Loan Fund is given in the Financial Statement.

Mr. MACARTNEY: What I am more particularly referring to now is a full disclosure of information in connection with the recent loan arrangements and the intentions of the hon. member with reference to the future. Statements are going abroad in connection with his movements, and we should like to know what arrangements are going to be made in the possible absence of the Premier. I think it would be reasonable for him to take the House into his confidence, so that criticism may be based on actual fact and not upon inference.

The PREMIER: At a later stage, I will refer to those subjects.

Mr. MACARTNEY: If the hon. member assures the House that fair information will be given freely I am quite satisfied. I realise that the public services have got to be provided for. I realise, too, that the resolution is becoming something of an every-day character, and I realise over and above it all that there is not much use in our objecting to it from this side of the House. We can at most only delay the business, for, whether the motion is right or wrong, it will be carried by the weight of greater numbers on the other side. At the same time I invite the hon. member to treat the Opposition liberally with respect to that information to which we are entitled, in order that we may have a reasonable discussion on these matters.

Question put and passed.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The PREMIER, in moving—

“That there be granted to His Majesty, on account, for the service of the year 1919-20, a further sum not exceeding £2,150,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

said: The amount asked for from consolidated revenue is only £1,400,000, the amount from Trust and Special Funds £150,000, and the amount from Loan Funds £600,000. This will be sufficient, as I have already

indicated, to carry us on till the end of February at the rate of expenditure in which the Government are now involved. It may be said that this amount proportionately for the six weeks or so is really more than the expenditure in the previous Appropriation Bill for a greater period. There has already been granted in the four preceding Appropriation Bills £3,600,000 from consolidated revenue, £1,200,000 from Trust Funds, and £1,300,000 from Loan Funds. These sums, together with those proposed to be appropriated in this Bill, will make £5,000,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, £1,350,000 from Trust Funds, and £1,900,000 from Loan Fund. That will cover a period of eight months, or two-thirds of the financial year. On a reference to the Estimates, it will be seen that the amount asked for from revenue is considerably less than two-thirds of the total amount. The amount from Trust Funds is in excess of the two-thirds, owing to the fact that nearly the whole of the expenditure on Central sugar-mills comes in the first months of the financial year; so that the rate of appropriation asked for to-day is not greater than will be sufficient to keep within the estimated requirements for the whole year.

The hon. member asked for fuller information with regard to the position in connection with the recent issue in London, and with regard to our policy in loan expenditure for the future. I thought that the position was fully dealt with in the Financial Statement. As far as particulars concerning the recent issue are concerned, they cannot be given yet, because the account sales will not be put in our possession for some time—that is, particulars regarding commissions and other expenses in regard to the issue. On page 7 of the Financial Statement a reference is made to the terms of the loan as known to the Treasury at the time the Financial Statement was compiled, and there is very little additional information that can be added to those particulars. The rate is given, the price of issue, what the loan returned to the Treasury, the net amount, and the cost to the Government, the amount of subscriptions, and so on. Beyond that I cannot say anything to-day.

With regard to the loan policy of the Government; that is set forth very fully in the succeeding pages of the Financial Statement—pages 8, 9, and 10—and was compiled after a good deal of consideration by the Cabinet for the purpose of determining what works we should concentrate upon, and determining what should be done with the limited resources at our command. We realise that work is more costly now than heretofore, and we hope to husband our resources as much as possible. At the same time, some works are practically indispensable, and some undertakings must be gone on with unless we have stagnation, and for that reason we have endeavoured to formulate a reasonable policy. It is true this policy does involve an expenditure of nearly £4,000,000 this financial year. This is a much larger sum than we expended last year, and it is a larger sum than has been expended in any previous year. The nearest approach to it in previous years was the expenditure in one year of the Denham Administration, when they expended £3,600,000. That was in a year when money was plentiful, and consequently they were not restricted in the same sense as we are now. At the same time, works are more

costly now, and to accomplish the work on which the Denham Administration spent £3,600,000, we should probably require over £5,000,000. That difficulty which faces us here is a difficulty which faces every Government in Australia, and probably of every country in the world. From a careful consideration of the Financial Statement it will be seen that a statement of the particular railway lines we hope to concentrate upon, and other developmental works, such as water supply, soldier settlement, the financing of local bodies, and so on, is set out. Loans to local bodies have increased. The amount we ask for by way of appropriation is increased very considerably, as compared with last year, and as compared with pre-war years. The reason for that is that the local authority works have fallen into arrear through the necessity of limiting the funds available to them. The same restrictions that have been placed on the Government in regard to the available loan money had to apply to the local authorities. With regard to the funds available to-day, I have endeavoured to meet them as far as possible, with the limited resources at our command, by endeavouring to meet all their reasonable requirements this year.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What about the Commonwealth loan?

The PREMIER: One reason why we are able to do more than we otherwise would have been able to do is because the Commonwealth is co-operating to some extent with the State Government in advancing, or promising to advance, some money to enable us to make advances to local authorities for certain works that will give employment to the returned soldiers and others. The Commonwealth looked at it in a reasonable light, and have made available £200,000, but they cast upon us the obligation of seeing that only reasonable works should be financed. They cast the responsibility upon us of supervising the expenditure, and seeing that the conditions which they laid down are carried out. We are responsible to the Commonwealth for the redemption of the loan, and the payment of interest upon it. The Commonwealth does not make the loans to the local authorities, but to the State Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What are they charging?

The PREMIER: We are supposed to pay them what it costs, and that is an unknown sum at the present time. Whatever the loan costs the Commonwealth we are expected to pay.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are charging 5½ per cent.

The PREMIER: We are charging 5½ per cent. at the present time. The arrangement is one that gives us more elasticity in dealing with applications from local authorities, and loans for works are now being granted to the local authorities. It is a pity, I think, that we should have to limit the local authorities in any way, for most of the local authority schemes—I speak quite candidly—are schemes which are reasonable, and most of them are schemes which are very necessary for the development of the local areas, and schemes that can be approved. In many cases, I have to admit, the Works Department has to suggest alterations to plans, or modifications, but the schemes themselves are sound, and there is not much danger in advancing money to

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local authorities to carry the schemes out. In speaking of local authorities I include harbour boards, the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board, the local authorities, and others. It would be a good thing if we could finance them up to their full requirements, but it is impossible to do that. Hon. members will understand that when I say the applications to the Government for loans to local authorities aggregate at the present time about £1,750,000. That cannot all be advanced in one year, but we are picking out the most urgent and most important works and those that will give the most work, and financing the local authorities accordingly.

The hon. member made an allusion to the suggestion that has been mooted that I am contemplating a visit to England. It is true that I am contemplating a visit to England, and the necessity for that visit arises from the fact that we shall shortly have to discuss the necessity of further advances. It must be perfectly obvious to anyone who takes any interest in these matters that the loan recently raised and the arrangements made with the Commonwealth in regard to financing the local authorities will not provide us with sufficient funds to carry on for any extended period. It would never do to exhaust the exchequer and find it necessary to shut down on all public works. That would lead to disaster. It is necessary to keep in close touch with the money market conditions on the other side and inform ourselves as to what conditions are operating there, with a view to making the best arrangements possible for our future financing. It is also necessary—I mention this to the House, not that there is any settled policy in regard to it, but it is information of interest to the House as well as to the Government—it will be necessary to take up with the Imperial Government the question of immigration. The Imperial Government for some months past have been in touch with the State Governments and the Dominion Governments with regard to the possibility of absorbing here ex-service men from England under conditions under which the Imperial Government help us to finance the proposal. It is very important that we should give attention to that policy and endeavour to formulate something that will be of advantage to the State. And it is with a view to discussing that also that I am at present contemplating going to the other side. There are other matters, which it may be premature to make a public announcement upon at the present time, that will engage my attention over there, but later on I hope to make a fuller statement. I do not think there is anything further I need state now. If there are any other matters on which hon. members desire information, they might ask me during the course of their remarks.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*), who, on rising, was received with Opposition "Hear, hears," said: I am sure we all followed with a great deal of interest the remarks of the Premier just now, and I think it is only right that he should have furnished the Committee with the particulars which he has given. It is perfectly certain, from the statement he has made this afternoon with regard to the amount of money that is required for the next six weeks on loan account—I think he mentioned a sum approximately amounting to £600,000—and owing to the fact, as he stated, that the

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estimated expenditure from Loan Fund for the financial year ending 30th June next will amount to £4,000,000—I think it is perfectly certain that the recently floated loan will not carry us very much beyond that particular period, because I remember that information was supplied at the end of December to the effect that the amount then available on Loan Account was about £700,000. That did not include the recently acquired loan in the old country; but the fact remains that if the expenditure is to continue at the rate it is now going on, then something will have to be done to replenish very quickly the Loan Account, because it is certainly running perilously close to danger. I would like to ask the Premier, in connection with his visit to the old country, whether he is going to take into consideration the question of the maturing loans? I can well remember, when the hon. gentleman was on this side of the House, and when the late Government had certain maturing loans, that he blamed us for not taking certain action and taking that certain action early. I find, upon reference to his own table, that in 1922 there is a maturing loan of £1,275,000, and then I find that in 1920 and 1925—the time being optional—there are loans maturing amounting to £11,728,000. And it is up to the Treasurer to tell us what the attitude of the Government is going to be in connection with these particular loans. The Treasurer will shortly have some idea as to whether his financial advisers in the old country—the Bank of England, I presume—through the Agent-General, have any information as to what the prospects are for money—whether money is likely to be dearer or cheaper. Such a matter is so very important to this House that the Treasurer ought to furnish us with all the particulars possible in that particular regard. It is perfectly certain, if we can judge by some of the answers given by the Premier lately, that he himself views the position of the finances with some alarm. I think he said it was the duty of all parties to assist at the present time by serving the interests of the State as far as possible from the financial side. My leader very properly [4 p.m.] suggested that the getting of the fullest information from the Treasurer would be a matter which would assist in that particular direction. But it is very certain, from some of the answers which have been given to the unemployed, that the hon. gentleman himself, from a statement he made here this afternoon in connection with his contemplated visit to the old country, is anxious as to the future. Now, I think he ought to take us into his confidence as to what his advisers have said in connection with the prospects of getting more money, because it is perfectly certain that unless we can get more money there is going to be stagnation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Did you ever give that information when you were Treasurer?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was always a most obliging Treasurer, and always supplied any reasonable information that the Opposition at that time were seeking. (Government laughter.) But the fact does remain that the Government ought, under the peculiar circumstances of the State, and bearing in mind that their financial administration from ordinary revenue and expenditure has been an administration which has indicated—if I

may say it—want of ability, that we ought to receive from them this afternoon all the information possible. Now, it will be very satisfactory to us to learn from the Treasurer as to how long he will be away. It will be satisfactory to learn from him if he thinks that the increased taxation which is proposed in these taxation proposals which have been laid before the House will be a barrier to his obtaining money in the old country; because I take it that these heavy loads that are going to be put on will have an effect of limiting the supply of money which can be obtained in the old country. I think this afternoon the Treasurer ought to give us information along those particular lines. I can well remember, when I was Treasurer, the policy always was to consult our advisers in the old country as to what the prospects were. I want particularly to point out that the Treasurer himself drew attention the other day to the fact that the different States and the different people who were borrowing money had to take their turn. He was quite right in making that statement. It is not always convenient even for big institutions such as the Bank of England to allow any State to just step on to the London money market at its own sweet will. He is quite right in stating that the opportunities for borrowing are arranged for by the Bank of England. Now, I want to know if he can furnish the Committee with any idea as to when we come next. For instance, it may be that New South Wales are going on the London money market, or that Victoria or some of the other States are going on the market. It always takes time to float a loan. I want to ask the Treasurer if he has any information as to when Queensland's turn will come next; because he himself touched the point which is vital to the community—namely, that if there is a stoppage of moneys it will limit the employment of men. And it must further be borne in mind that we have got to the high-water mark of expenditure from the borrowing point of view. It is a case of more and more and more, and apparently the Premier himself is not able to satisfy the unemployed at this particular juncture. They claim that he is not doing all that he should do. Therefore, if by any means he found himself up against a difficulty which indicated he could not borrow any more, the position would be exceedingly acute, and I am quite prepared to admit with him that it would mean unemployment in this State. Leaving the loan expenditure for the time being, I want also to draw the attention of the Treasurer to the continued increased expenditure from revenue. The Treasurer, in the Budget which he recently issued, spoke of exercising caution and care, and seeing that extravagance was a thing of the past, I want to ask if, during the last six months, the returns which we have had before us from month to month indicate that there is a slackening in that particular regard?

The PREMIER: It may indicate an increased expenditure, but not extravagance.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is the way in which the Treasurer always flatters himself.

The PREMIER: Let me give you one item. In the last six months in the Railway Department an award has increased the salaries by £200,000 per annum. You would not call that extravagance?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, I am not dealing with that at all. I do not say it is. I do say, touching on the railways, that it is a significant fact that, notwithstanding the last information revealed the fact that fewer train miles at that time were run—I do not say it is so now—the number of men in the employment of the department was very much greater than formerly. Am I not right in coming to this conclusion, that the Government in a certain direction are not adopting business methods in connection with the management of the railways? It does seem to me that the only way in which the Government can, at any time, succeed in connection with their management, is when they are able to lay hold of stuff which is very much cheaper than that which the private individual can lay hold off. When they have to compete on even terms, they hopelessly fail. Is it not a fact that there is another thing operating in connection with the railways? A little while ago the excuse was that the constant failure in connection with the locomotives was due to the water. I am prepared to admit the expert said that that was the reason. Ask anyone who travels by train what is the position to-day. It is patent to everybody that the rolling-stock is in an unsatisfactory condition, and some of the carriages are really a disgrace to those who have to deal with them. Getting back to revenue and expenditure, the question does arise that, as a matter of fact, there is going on that which indicates some want of control. Then, might I remind the hon. gentleman this afternoon we are quite right in getting all the information we can at this particular period by reason of the fact that, notwithstanding there has been such an increased amount of expenditure, the Treasurer himself has been getting from the public a very large amount of increased revenue. It seems almost incredible that in the years which have passed since 1914-15, not taking into consideration the provision which the Treasurer is making by increased taxation, that there is increased taxation amounting to over £2,000,000 in that very short period. Just imagine that since 1914-15 the burden which has been laid upon the people, assuming that the proposals will go through, will be a burden by the end of the financial year of over £3,000,000 in connection with direct taxation. Yet, if that were going to be the final burden, one could understand it, but, apparently, it is not. If we could believe that these proposals of increased taxation were going to be the means of making the finances balance, we might say it is an awful thing, but there is going to be an end of it. But what hope have we, judging by our experience of the financial administration of the past, that the Treasurer is going to succeed? The real secret of the trouble is that the Treasurer and his Ministry and party are dominated by these outside people who insist again and again that their behests are going to be obeyed.

Mr. CARTER: Oh, nonsense!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Port Curtis knows how true it is. It would be quite a revelation if he hon. member would take us into his confidence, and let us know what he knows in connection with some of those debates which have taken place in caucus in connection with this particular matter. Might I draw the attention of the Treasurer to another position? Surely, in connection with the railways he must feel that the position is an alarming

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one. Might I remind the Committee that, whilst in 1914-15 the returns were £3 16s. 7d., during the financial year 1918-19 they were only 13s. 9d.

The PREMIER: The same situation exists in every State in Australia.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is wrong in making that statement. He may, to some extent, be right, but when he takes the comparison that has to be made between this State and other States he will find it very much against Queensland, and he knows that. As a matter of fact, the hon. gentleman knows, as far as Queensland is concerned, that it holds the record in two or three directions. One is—and the hon. gentleman will forgive me for saying it—for being about the worst managed State in the Commonwealth. It holds another record, that its railways are gradually going from bad to worse as far as the return upon investment is concerned. Then it holds another record, and that is that it is the most heavily taxed of all the States. Does the hon. gentleman deny that?

The PREMIER: It holds the record of having the taxation imposed upon proper shoulders.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is trying to side-track it. It not only holds the record in that particular direction, but, as the hon. member for Mirani says, it holds the record for strikes. One would have thought when the old Liberal Government were here they might have been responsible for strikes, but when you look up and see what has really been the result of the Labour Government's administration I say it is appalling. I suspect that the strikes have been largely accentuated and added to by reason of the fact that the Government themselves have made it easy for the strikers. In addition to that, they have a record for unemployment. It is exceedingly interesting to me to find, first of all, the Minister for Railways being interviewed and then the Treasurer being interviewed—or rather attempts made often to interview the Treasurer, and somehow or other either the police prevent them or the Treasurer is out.

The PREMIER: I always give them a reasonable hearing.

HON. W. H. BARNES: When they happen to catch the Treasurer they get a reasonable hearing, but the difficulty is in catching him.

The PREMIER interjected.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Might I remind the Treasurer that up in the North, where it was thought Labour had full sway and all the friends of the Treasurer were supposed to live, they have said over and over again that they had had a Minister for Public Works who was prepared to listen to them and give them a reasonable hearing, and they are sighing for the fleshpots of Egypt again.

The PREMIER: If anybody said that they would not be saying the truth.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would admit they were actually stating the truth. Before I sit down this afternoon I want to ask the Treasurer if he has given any further attention to the Auditor-General's report? The Auditor-General again and again has drawn attention to the position in which Queensland is. I want to ask would the Auditor-General, for the sake of doing it, draw attention to

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that? Does he not regard it as a duty to this House, whose servant he is? I want to know is the Treasurer giving consideration to the warning which the Auditor-General has given? It might be that when the Treasurer gets to the old country it might be found that he was deserting the ship.

The PREMIER: You will find that the Treasurer is all right.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I do not wish the hon. gentleman any harm. After he goes to England, when he comes back to Queensland, I would not be surprised to find that he has an enlarged vision of things, and he will be a much wiser and samer man than he is to-day. I believe the associations he will meet with in England will be for his good. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman will wear a belltopper or not in England. It would be interesting to have a camera, so that if there is a belltopper worn we may have the edification of seeing a picture of the hon. gentleman with one.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about your belltopper?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will be pleased to lend mine to the Treasurer if it is big enough. (Laughter.) We heard of a distinguished statesman whose hat at one time measured 7 $\frac{1}{2}$, but as soon as he got into office it was necessary to get a 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ hat. I am afraid that applies to the hon. gentleman: that might be the reason why my hat would not suit him. (Laughter.) Putting jesting on one side, I suggest to the hon. gentleman in all seriousness that the position of the finances in Queensland is very serious. I say that in all earnestness. The hon. gentleman must know that from his Trust Funds, his Loan Account, and his Revenue Account. He must know that there are deficiencies on account of loans that are accumulating. They have been accumulating from year to year, and they have not been dealt with yet. The hon. gentleman must know that the position, so far as Queensland is concerned, is absolutely acute. It is not a bit of use the Premier trying to make the people of Queensland believe that he has so managed the affairs of Queensland that they are satisfactory. Notwithstanding an increased revenue of £2,200,000, approximately, since 1914-15, the state of Queensland financially is in an absolutely bad way. I want to ask the Treasurer if he will see, in the interests of this great State, if some improvement cannot be made, and if he will set himself the task of trying to adjust things in a way which will not be putting a further burden upon the people in the way he is doing, and which will not be repudiating contracts, as he proposes to do in his Financial Statement? No doubt, that will bump up against him in the old country. I hope the Treasurer will understand the position, and deal with it in a way that will show that he is a statesman. Is he prepared to do that kind of thing? If he is, then he will earn the thanks of Queensland. After all, the Government of a country is very much like a big business, and you cannot go on showing deficits year after year. If you continue to have deficits in a business or in the Government of a country, it will only bring in its wake the ruin of the country and the community generally.

The PREMIER: The Philp Government had deficits for year after year.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that for eight or nine years there were successive surpluses. The hon. gentleman knows that he himself issued a circular just before the election drawing attention to deficiencies which took place under a former Government amounting to £415,000 in four years. In spite of that circular we know that in the last three or four years the total deficiencies of the present Government amount to something like £850,000. The hon. gentleman can hold up the old Government as a model in being able to manage the affairs of the country much better than he is doing.

Mr. GILDAY: How did they do it? By sweating the public servants.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is not true.

Mr. GILDAY: It is quite true.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows that the value of money in 1914 was much better than it is to-day.

Mr. GILDAY: What did you do in 1902?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was not in office.

Mr. GILDAY: You paid the railway men 4s. 6d. a day, and then put a poll tax of 10s. a head on all of them.

Mr. CARTER: Scandalous! Scandalous!

HON. W. H. BARNES: Might I draw the hon. gentleman's attention to this, that in 1902 there was a tremendous shrinkage of revenue, while to-day the revenue is increasing.

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

Mr. MACARTNEY: Before the question is put, I would like to offer a few remarks. The hon. member for Bulimba had not quite finished his speech. That is no fault of yours, Mr. Smith, but because his time expired owing to the time limit fixed by the Standing Orders.

The PREMIER: He was more moderate to-day than he usually is.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member for Bulimba was referring to the comparison which was made between 1902 and the present day. The hon. member for Brisbane interjected, and there were also interjections from the hon. members for Port Curtis and Ithaca regarding 1902. As a matter of fact, the conditions of things in 1902 was absolutely the reverse of the conditions which have obtained during the last four years. There was a period of financial crisis in 1902, and the railway revenue, in fact, all branches of revenue, by reason of the condition of the country, was shrinking. We know that severe droughts existed in the country, and the revenue was going down from year to year. But that is not the case so far as the last year or two is concerned, because we know that the revenue of the country has been steadily increasing. It is quite true that within the last two or three years the revenue of the country did not increase in certain directions. It did not increase in directions which would indicate an expansion. But, by reason of the taxation which has been imposed, the revenue of Queensland has been increasing, and the position to-day is not due to a decrease in revenue, so much as it is due to actual extravagant expenditure.

The PREMIER: Not extravagant, but unavoidable expenditure.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. member for Ithaca makes an extravagant suggestion when he says that the revenue in 1902 was taken from the unfortunate men who only got 4s. 6d. a day.

Mr. GILDAY: It was done, and you must admit it. You can't deny it.

Mr. MACARTNEY: That was not the position at all. Any man receiving under £50 was not supposed to contribute anything, and there was an actual power given to the Commissioner of Income Tax to give relief in any case of hardship. So it is not a correct statement that the hon. gentleman makes. I think we might deal with these things in something like a reasonable and fair way. I do not know that it is wise to congratulate anyone nowadays, but I am prepared to say that the Treasurer has done a wise thing in taking the people of Queensland into his confidence in regard to his departure for England, and the reason for it. The mystery that has always attended the departure of the Premier for the last year or two has been of a most unsatisfactory character, and the fact that the hon. gentleman is adopting a somewhat different course is likely to give a great deal of satisfaction. I regret that the hon. gentleman is going away. I wished that he could send the Treasurer, and remain here to look after the affairs of Government himself, as the responsible head of the Government, but as he is the Treasurer and the Premier as well, there is considerable difficulty in the way of doing that. There is no doubt, as the hon. gentleman pointed out this afternoon, that there is business to be done in England, and it is business that requires a certain amount of consideration. Whether that business can best be done by the Premier going home to attend to it, or whether it can be best left in the hands of the Agent-General, I am not now prepared to say. At any rate, I welcome the candid statement of the hon. gentleman regarding his intentions to visit the old country. The hon. gentleman has not given us very wide information in regard to the loan which was recently floated in London. A paragraph appears in the Financial Statement which gives a certain amount of information regarding the flotation of that loan, but it has not given us all the information we would like. We must only come to the conclusion that Queensland has not been as successful as New South Wales on the loan market. New South Wales recently got a loan floated in London under much more favourable terms than Queensland, although, perhaps, the loan was not subscribed so largely by large or small subscriptions, as was our case. Queensland has not been much more fortunate than other places seeking loans in London. In a leading journal I read that an obscure place like Liberia, a nigger State in Africa, succeeded in obtaining a loan on the London market on as favourable terms as Queensland.

The PREMIER: Was that loan not guaranteed by the Imperial Government?

Mr. MACARTNEY: Yes, but they succeeded in obtaining a loan on as favourable terms as Queensland. If we have to get loans, and loans are necessary, then it is the wish of all parties that we should get those loans on the most beneficial terms. I congratulate hon. members opposite on their admission that these loans are required for the development of Queensland. They

Mr. Macartney.]

were not always in favour of loans, but now they are going to the opposite extreme. Members opposite are adopting a policy which is contrary to the one previously adopted by their party, and they are now going the whole hog. The question now before us is that £600,000 of loan money is required for six weeks. If we reckon that up we will find that that amounts to £5,000,000 a year. That amount is asked for before the financial proposals of the Government have been adopted. It looks as if the Government are prepared to come along with these proposals with the idea that Parliament will adopt anything they like to put before it. I think that the Government are called upon to make some reasonable provision for the unemployed. No man with humanitarian ideas can suggest that the unemployed are to be allowed to swelter in their condition of want while other people are proceeding in a position of comfort. I ask the Government to consider from what cause the unemployment arises. Let them take that into consideration. Why should we in Queensland have so much unemployment when the finances have been so buoyant as they have been for the last four or five years? That needs an explanation. The Government have been spending more money during the last three or four years than has been spent before in the history of the State. They have received more money by way of revenue. What is the reason that there are so many unemployed under such conditions? During the period of the war we received greater prices for Queensland products, and our production has been more justified and consequently greater than ever. We realise also that, owing to the financial management of the Commonwealth affairs, there has been a greater circulation of money in this country. Yet we have unemployed. What is the explanation of it? In some directions we see that enterprise which hitherto has been current in Queensland has been interfered with in some way or other, and because of that these men have come on the labour market. I am prepared to admit that drought may account for the unemployment of some, but it does not account for the great volume of unemployment we have. Later on, I will be able to show that the unemployment in Queensland is due to the stagnation in private enterprise brought about by the unreasonable and heavy taxation of the Government, and the heavy expenditure indulged in by the Government at a time when the country should have been economical. In Queensland things are not going ahead as they should do, and that is the reason that so much unemployment is here. I would like the Treasurer to look into the causes of unemployment and the causes of stagnation of enterprise, with the view of curing it, by removing the cause rather than by accentuating the position by imposing heavy and unnecessary taxation.

I do not wish to take up any [4.30 p.m.] more time, but I should like to endorse what the hon. member for Bulimba said in regard to the rolling stock of the State. We have on the front Government bench a gentleman who saw vast impropriety in the expenditure in the Railway Department at one time, and who indicated that he could make a saving of something like £250,000 a year. That hon. gentleman occupied a position on the Commission which went fully into the affairs of the Railway Department, and I am sorry to

say that, notwithstanding the recommendations of that Commission, the things that the hon. gentleman complained of are worse to-day in the railway administration than they were then. You will meet men in various parts of the State who won't hesitate to tell you that the railways are largely overmanned in certain directions. You will meet men who will tell you that the condition of the engines in the Railway Department and of the general rolling stock is such that if same were taken into account for the purpose of arriving at depreciation or a balance-sheet, we would find ourselves a couple of millions behind because of the amount that would be necessary to put that rolling stock into good condition. These are not things that appear on the surface, but they are very serious matters in connection with the financial position of the State. With the hon. member for Bulimba, I desire to thank the Treasurer for giving us the further information he has, and I assure him that if he will continue to take us into his confidence and give us that information we ought to get in connection with the finances of the State, he will find that he will get the assistance of this side of the House rather than otherwise. The condition of the State is such that all parties should unite in trying to get the State out of the quagmire that the present Administration has allowed it to get into. The Treasurer has put a very good face on the condition of Queensland for some time past, but if we could only get to the back of his head we would find that he realises the seriousness of the position.

The PREMIER: I do not ignore the seriousness of it, but I do repudiate any suggestion that the Administration were responsible.

Mr. MACARTNEY: The hon. gentleman cannot get away from the fact. It is all very well to say that the administration cannot be responsible for it, but every act of the administration has tended in that direction. They have handed over the affairs of the Public Service to an outside power, and that act alone is responsible to some extent for the condition of the State finances. I say that, no matter what face the hon. gentleman puts upon it, if we could only get to the back of his head, he would be found to admit and agree with the seriousness of the position as it is from time to time described by this side of the House. You will find phrase after phrase in "Hansard" in each successive year showing that this side of the House were pointing out where things were drifting to, and the results which are to be seen to-day only go to show that those warnings were sincere, honest, and true when they were given. I trust the hon. gentleman will come down from that platform of obstinate denial as to the serious position which the finances of the State are in, and endeavour to attack the causes of the trouble, and bring the position more in that direction in which it ought to be.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I feel in all seriousness the financial condition of Queensland, which, in common with the other States of Australia, is just coming through the effects of the great war. But we must remember that not one penny of the revenue of this State went towards the prosecution of the war, and yet we find ourselves in the financial position we are in, notwithstanding the increased taxation we have had—that

[*Mr. Macartney.*]

every means of taxation has been seized by the present Government to try to bring about increased revenue so that they may have something more to squander—we find ourselves in a deplorable position. The total expenditure in the State of Queensland for the last twelve months amounts to something like £14,000,000 sterling, and yet we have throughout the State a greater amount of unemployment than ever before. We must remember, too, that this State will be called upon to fulfill its duty towards that taxation that is essential to find money for the expenses of the war.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: "Pay up, and look cheerful."

Mr. CORSER: The unfortunate part about this paying up and looking cheerful is that most of us who are on the land have to borrow to pay our land tax, and also our State and Federal income tax; so that it is not too cheerful a state of affairs.

Mr. COLLINS: They cannot be in too bad a position if they are paying both State and Federal income tax.

Mr. CORSER: They have to borrow to pay it.

Mr. DUNSTAN: If they did not have the income, they would not have to pay the tax.

Mr. CORSER: That is where our friends are wrong. Any persons who assessed their stock a little time ago for the Federal or State income will be paying on the assessment of stock that are dead to-day. I am one of those unfortunate individuals, and most people who come from the country districts are in that position to-day, and they will have to continue to pay it. The extraordinary revelation of the Minister to-day shows that he is asking for about £600,000 Loan Fund for a few weeks of this appropriation. It shows that approximately £4,800,000 or nearly £5,000,000 Loan Fund is to be expended during this financial year, and if the expenditure is to be on a par with the expenditure of the last few months it will be unbearable. £4,800,000 from Loan Funds in one year; and continued increased unemployment and strife in our industries.

Mr. BRENNAN: Whose fault is that?

Mr. CORSER: The fault of the Government; certainly not the fault of the Opposition. The fault of the administration that was going to bring about Utopia in this Queensland of ours. And with this tremendous increase from Loan Fund, I ask city or country electors' representatives are their particular districts benefiting thereby? What district is benefiting by this huge expenditure? We would expect to see huge railway developments, huge developments of our resources and industries. But we cannot see them. Railways are started in every direction—some have been started for four years, and not five chains of rails have been laid, and at the head of many of these railways you will find miles and miles of steel rails lying there rusting with sleepers alongside—no attempt being made to lay them. Yet the Minister for Railways will tell us from time to time he has no steel rails.

Mr. BRENNAN: Where are those steel rails that you speak of?

Mr. CORSER: On practically all of the railway constructions.

Mr. BRENNAN: Give us some concrete cases.

Mr. CORSER: You will find those steel rails waiting for some magic wand to say that this work must be proceeded with. Previous Governments did not spend more than £2,000,000 a year from Loan Funds. This Government is approaching this year £5,000,000. I claim, if that increase was necessary, it was necessary in this direction: a million or two should have been appropriated, and a fund formed so that our struggling settlers who have given the best of their lives on the land could be relieved from the deplorable condition they are in through the drought and loss of stock. Nobody could then complain about the tremendous amount of money that is being spent this year from Loan Funds.

Mr. BRENNAN: What did you do in 1902 regarding assistance?

Mr. CORSER: There was one thing we did not do—increase the freights and fares.

Mr. KIRWAN: Oh, yes, you did! And you put a poll tax on top of it.

Mr. CORSER: We did not increase the freights and fares to the man in the country who had lost his all; and, what is further, we made concessions to those who wanted it on those occasions and gave them assistance, similar assistance to which has never been given since.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Where?

Mr. CORSER: Reid's Creek, for a start. There were men who did not have a penny in their pockets who were put on the land, with an overseer over them, and £300 advanced to them. And if we did wrong on those occasions—not we, but the Government in power at that time; I was not in the Government—

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Did you do anything from 1902 to 1914?

Mr. CORSER: Nothing like what the present Opposition are going to do after the next election. (Government laughter.) Many of those people who were supported by the late Premier, Mr. Ryan, in 1902 have been responsible for a lot of the conditions, but that is no excuse for the present Government being even worse than they were.

The Treasurer refers to his trip to the old country, and claims that one of the reasons is to arrange for the immigration which the Government hope will come about—that is, to settle Imperial soldiers on the land in Queensland. At an early period of the war, Sir Rider Haggard came to Australia and received from this present Government an offer of 1,000,000 acres of our land on which to settle the Imperial soldiers. When they made that promise they were not giving anything; the lands belonged to the Crown, and they were giving them on condition that they would be financed from the other side. Years ago we had all that information, so what is the use of the Treasurer giving it now as his reason for going home?

The PREMIER: Sir Rider Haggard was not acting officially for the Imperial Government.

Mr. CORSER: He was acting officially for the Imperial Government.

The PREMIER: No, he was not.

Mr. CORSER: And you made use of the statement that you offered to the Imperial Government, through Sir Rider Haggard, 1,000,000 acres of land on which to settle Imperial soldiers—

The PREMIER: Sir Rider Haggard was not representing the Imperial Government.

Mr. Corser.]

Mr. CORSER: He was representing that branch of it that had the care of the soldiers.

The PREMIER: He was a delegate of the Colonial Institute—I received him here as Acting Premier.

Mr. CORSER: And he received a promise from the Queensland Government of 1,000,000 acres of land on behalf of the soldiers who wished to come here. The Imperial Government took it up with one exception, but they did not encourage their farming community to come here.

The PREMIER: You are not fully informed.

Mr. CORSER: They were not going to encourage the sending away of their rural population, but were going to encourage them to stay in their own land. One private company in Rhodesia offered 500,000 acres of their territory under exactly the same conditions, so that the Queensland Government have not done very much. Before the Premier need go home to see how he is going to make the best offer for settling Imperial soldiers on the land let him first settle himself to the task of doing something more for our lads that are here. Let us first clean up our own house in that regard. Let us see that our Australian soldiers, and our Queensland soldiers in particular, are properly catered for before we undertake the settlement of a 1,000,000 acres of land by some other soldiers.

Mr. BRENNAN: What has Hughes done for the soldiers?

Mr. CORSER: He has done that much that they returned him at the last Federal elections.

Mr. KIRWAN: He offered them an I O U.

Mr. CORSER: You owe Hughes a lot anyhow. I find that per head of the population our loan expenditure is increasing very considerably. Our expenditure per head of the population this last year was £13 16s. 2d., and not one penny has been appropriated towards a sinking fund. Let me again refer to this little bible, and we must remember that this is supposed to have been the policy of the Denham Government.

Mr. KIRWAN: What are you quoting from?

Mr. CORSER: The "little red book."

Mr. KIRWAN: What is the name of it?

Mr. CORSER: The Labour party's bible.

Mr. KIRWAN: That is not the name of it.

Mr. CORSER: "What the Labour Platform means," and quoted from the platform and from every kerosene box by the Labour members during the 1915 election, and on those promises they were returned to power.

Mr. KIRWAN: We were returned again in 1918 with an increased majority.

Mr. CORSER: And will be turned out again next year. They were not returned at the Federal elections.

Mr. KIRWAN: It is sufficient to shake hands with the devil when you meet him.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Let the hon. member listen to this—

"It is absolutely essential that something should be done to put an end to a situation so crushingly oppressive. If the working class could realise how they are robbed by the institution known as the public debt there would be an outcry against further borrowing from one end

[Mr. Corser.

of the country to the other, and statesmen would find it imperative to devise means of extinguishing the debt, and terminating the folly of continuous interest paying."

Now we have got a very nice spectacle to-day. When that statement was made interest was being paid on £50,000,000, while to-day we are paying interest on £65,000,000. Further on this little book says—

"The Labour party demands that this state of affairs shall cease. It demands that definite measures shall be taken to wipe out loans as they mature, instead of following the fatal course of contracting new debts in order to pay off the old ones."

The Treasurer is going home to find out how he is going to redeem the £13,000,000 that is falling due.

The PREMIER: I would like to ask how would you pay that amount out of a consolidated revenue?

Mr. CORSER: I am asking you what you meant by making those statements. This little book continues—

"and continuing the payment of interest year after year without in any way reducing the principal owing.

"When it is pointed out that the interest now being remitted to London from Queensland is equivalent to a tax of 5s. 6d. a week"—

and to day it is 7s. 3d. a week, you will understand the sincerity of the statements made by hon. members opposite. They go on to complain about so many million pounds going to Europe, and state that the position is deplorable; the very position they are in to-day.

Mr. DUNSTAN: You sent home misstatements to prevent us getting any money at all.

Mr. CORSER: You claim that we do that? This is what they said previously—

"The non-success of the loan is evidence of the distrust by home investors in the present administration in Queensland, who are increasing the burden of debt."

So you must have done the very same thing. In your "little red book" you decry the administration and cry stinking fish.

The PREMIER: Those remarks were evidently based on the failure of the loan. We have not reached that position.

Mr. CORSER: Do you claim that under our administration loans failed?

The PREMIER: Some of them did.

Mr. CORSER: You know that that is absolutely incorrect, and we have evidence from your own side that your own loan was a failure. The hon. member for Bowen said that £40,000,000 should have been subscribed for the loan, and, no doubt, he was considering that the reason why such a large sum should have been subscribed was because of the tremendous price paid for it, and the hon. member cannot give as full information in regard to it at the present time.

The PREMIER: The recent loan was not a failure.

Mr. CORSER: I am not going to contradict the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. DUNSTAN: He never said that.

Mr. CORSER: You can turn it up in "Hansard."

Mr. DUNSTAN: He said the British investors should have lent more money.

Mr. ARMFIELD: He said if they were doing their duty to this country they would have loaned more money.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. CORSER: I do not want to discourage the Government in any way, but there is one thing I desire to say. This is the first time that the Premier has stated what he is going home for. We never heard what Mr. Ryan went home for.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Mrs. Duncan knew what he went home for.

Mr. CORSER: This little book further says—

“It is a senseless and suicidal policy for the public, and the only beneficiaries under it are the financial institutions and the mortgage-mongering owners of our large estates who are mostly absentees.” Those are the only people who benefit by floating loans at home. That is beautiful! Then “the little red book” says—

“No person of intelligence would conduct his private affairs in such a reckless fashion.”

I think I read that yesterday.

Mr. KIRWAN: If I had a shilling for every line of repetition of what you said last night I would have a good holiday.

Mr. CORSER: I would not like to have to eat all the words that the hon. member will say before he sits again for three years on that side. If I did, I would have a good holiday. I hope the experience that the Premier will get on the other side will broaden his mind. He is big enough and old enough to have had experience, but, unfortunately, it has been in the narrow groove, and he has never had the opportunity which I trust he will have during his sojourn on the other side, and that he will come back a bigger man and will deal with the financial position in such a way as any fair-minded man would.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murrilla*): I hope that the Premier will immediately meet his Ministers and endeavour to formulate some scheme whereby those who are unemployed in Queensland may be given employment at some useful work. At the present time men from different parts of the State congregate in Brisbane or some other large town and temporary employment is found for them after they demonstrate publicly and make themselves a nuisance to different Ministers who have the power to give employment. These men are sent haphazard into different localities and given work on our railways. Some scheme should be initiated by the Government to find useful employment for these men. Such a scheme might take years to complete, but during the time unemployment is prevalent those who are suitable could be engaged in the work. Take, for instance, the State stations. We have a very large area now under the control of the State, and each one of those stations is capable of being developed and improved in the way of ring-barking and conserving of water, so that it will carry a larger number of stock. Why are not the unemployed sent to some of the State stations? Dillalah and some of the other stations eventually will become suitable for cutting up into areas of 10,000 or 20,000 acres, and if the unemployed were engaged in ring-barking and such work on those stations, they would become capable of carrying a great deal more stock than they can carry at the present time. The men would be engaged in reproductive work, and nobody would have any

objection to the Government giving such employment; but we find instead of these men being employed in work of that nature, which for all time will be of benefit, they are given work of an unproductive nature. If the State stations were improved in the way I suggest, the very moment the land is cut into small areas the incoming tenant would get a return, instead of which, under present conditions, it would take many years to make that land capable of carrying a large number of stock. The increased rental alone would more than pay the Government for the expenditure incurred. The Minister must recognise that.

The PREMIER: How many men do you think could be employed on Dillalah?

At 5 o'clock p.m.,

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

Mr. MORGAN: That is only one. You could give employment for three months, if not for six months, to at least 100 men; in fact, I think you could give employment for a greater period. A great number of the men who are out of work in Brisbane are those who have been engaged in bush work generally. The drought has had a certain effect on unemployment, I will admit. But the season for trapping opossums has been the greatest Queensland has ever known; in fact, the cheques were enormous in many instances. That industry is not likely to last long, taking into consideration the number of opossums caught during the past few months and the number of men who were engaged. Had that industry not been so profitable, instead of a few thousand men being unemployed, there would have been many thousands of men seeking Government relief. While the seasonal occupations were not available, a great number of men were absorbed in the opossum industry. I think a different method ought to be adopted to this haphazard way of giving employment to men. The very moment a few hundred men congregate from the country in the large cities and towns they are sent away, and the work they do is in no way reproductive; in fact, it is a charge on the State. I also would like to point out another source of unemployment. There are between 1,200 and 1,500 men out of employment in Brisbane at the present moment who, during a certain period of the year, find employment in the different meatworks in and around Brisbane. Why are those men out of employment? It is not altogether due to the drought. I admit the drought has a great deal to do with it. A great number of those men are out of employment owing to the fact that the meatworks have not been able to buy any stock in Queensland, and in consequence work has not been available for men. I obtained from the Lands Department the other day figures which show that from the 1st January, 1919, to 31st December, 1919, no fewer than 49,000 cattle were sent from different stations to Wallangarra. It can be stated that all those were fat stock which, under ordinary circumstances, would have found their way to Brisbane, and would have been slaughtered in the meatworks in this particular locality. The meatworks were unable to obtain those cattle because of price-fixing by the Government in respect of meat. The Government were compelling those meatworks to sell them a certain quantity of meat at 3d. per lb., and they were unable to go into the country districts and compete with the New

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South Wales buyers. Therefore, the work which would have been given to men here, the freights which would have been earned by our railways, and the by-products which would have been handled went into the Southern States. If 49,000 stock were sent out of Queensland by rail, I think it can be honestly stated without exaggeration that at least 50,000 went out of Queensland by road during the same period, because cattle in the far west cross the border and are there entrained for Sydney. They were slaughtered in other localities, and the whole of the revenue was lost to this State. Had there been no interference, work would have been available for a great number of those men who are unemployed at the present time. Against that we have the State butchers' shops, which claim they have made a profit of £40,000 odd. The Government, according to the figures we obtained from the Home Secretary, distributed in relief in the different large towns of Queensland no less a sum than £62,000 to those who were unemployed. To a great extent that was brought about by the price-fixing indulged in by the Government. On the one hand, the meat shops made a profit of £42,000, and on the other hand the Government gave away £62,000. I think it must be admitted that that is not a good business proposition, and those particular establishments have not done any good to Queensland generally. In the Roma district recently a great number of men were employed for political purposes. The Government spent thousands of pounds in giving work in those localities. Those men knew perfectly well they were there only for the purpose of recording their vote, and it was common talk amongst the men that no matter what they did during the period they would be found work until the by-election in that particular locality. Money was spent in cutting down grades in Roma, and we know that the greatest grades exist between Miles and Chinchilla. Any work done at Roma was practically useless for the time being, as it would not enable trains to proceed further than Chinchilla and to carry greater loads than they are carrying at present. The whole of that money spent in the Roma district was practically wasted for the time being. It will not be useful even to the Railway Department. I think the time has come when the Government should not bring about conditions of that sort. The railway administration, as we know, at the present moment is not conducive to good management. I hope the time will come, no matter what Government is in power, when the railways will be taken away from political control. One or more Commissioners should be appointed, and the whole control of the railways should be placed in their hands. The position of Minister for Railways should be available only for the purpose of inspecting new lines and bringing them forward for consideration. Until that is done there is no likelihood of the railways being a financial success.

Another matter upon which I wish to touch is the contemplated visit of the Premier to London. No sooner does a new man take up the position of Premier than he thinks he ought to display himself in London. While the benefits may be great to the State, it is often doubtful whether the expenditure is justified. I think very often it is just an amusement trip. I do not know whether the Premier has given any good reason why he should journey to England.

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The only reason I can see is that it has become a common practice for many years. I admit it was so during previous Administrations. At the very moment a man becomes Premier he thinks he should sail away with his wife and family and enjoy life abroad, mixing with dukes and duchesses, and generally spending an enormous amount of money, while we have in Queensland at the present moment unemployed who are on the verge of starvation and in want of work. My opinion is that the money could be better spent in Queensland. I admit that the Treasurer has been in office four or five years and might require to go away for health purposes. While that is so, I do not think it is sufficient to justify the spending of this money. The time is not opportune for money to be lavishly expended. The people outside will agree with me in saying there is no justification for the Premier undertaking that trip. Being a custom, perhaps we cannot object. The present Government seem to follow the customs adopted for the last twenty or thirty years, notwithstanding the fact that they were elected with a view to breaking away from old ideas and customs. It is no use a man crying stinking fish because a member gets up and admits there is distress in Queensland. It is apparent to any Government, and it is more apparent in many of the country districts than it is around the suburbs of Brisbane. It does not come under the notice of city representatives, a great number of whom do not know the suffering which the people are undergoing. I would like the Government to set aside a sum of money for the purpose of assisting those in country districts, when the drought breaks, to become possessed of stock, of seed, and the necessary implements so that they can immediately become useful settlers upon the land.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the Bill introduced last year?

Mr. MORGAN: That Bill will not assist the people whose cause I am advocating. The Government are doing nothing, and have not provided any funds in that direction. You will notice in some of the States they have set aside large sums of money for the purpose of assisting those who wish to restock after the drought. They are assisted immediately with money for the purpose of buying dairy stock and the seed necessary to sow seasonable crops. Unfortunately, in Queensland nothing has been done in that direction. No money has been set aside for that purpose, and if the season is favourable from a cultivation and dairying aspect, the poorer section of those people will have to sit still and see their grass go to waste, not having sufficient money to enable them to buy the stock necessary to make their selections a payable proposition. I think it will be admitted that it is just as bad to have no persons on the land as to have those who are in that position. They have everything necessary to enable them to make a living other than stock or seed. What are the Government doing? No provision is being made by way of money specially earmarked for that purpose. No announcement has been made to those people. In the coastal districts of the State they have had bountiful rains, and the drought has practically broken. Unfortunately, further west that is not so. On grazing areas people do not want relief from the State other than in the way of not having imposed upon them undue

taxation. There are men who are in this unfortunate position owing to the drought. They have got plenty of land and feed and machinery, but they have not got the money to buy seed or stock. I would like to know if the Government are prepared to come to their assistance immediately, before values go up. Will the Premier make an announcement saying that the Government will assist these men? We know that the future of Queensland depends absolutely on land settlement and land development and production. We must depend on these men who are on the land, and the Government should come to their assistance in the right direction to enable them to carry on production. There are a number of unemployed who could be induced to go upon the land with a view of becoming settlers, and by helping them to go upon the land the Government will be doing a much better service to the State and a more lasting service than they are by just allowing these men to live from hand to mouth according to the Government policy of to-day. The Government are just pursuing a policy of to-day and not thinking of to-morrow, and that is why the Government policy is not of such lasting benefit to the State. I do not object to money being spent in the State. I believe, with the hon. member for Bowen, that millions are necessary in order to develop Queensland, but these millions must be well spent. Since this present Government have been in office they have added £15,000,000 to the national debt of Queensland, and we are no better off to-day with the expenditure of that money than we were five years ago. As a matter of fact, we are worse off, because we have to find the interest to pay on that borrowed money. The money should be spent in a most beneficial way, and not as it has been done during the last five years, when all we have done is to increase our debt without getting any benefit from it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I quite agree that we cannot be too careful how we spend the money we are borrowing now. We are borrowing money at a high rate of interest, and we are spending it in a way that is not of much benefit to the State. I have seen men put on to work on the Western railway line to regrade the railway where it was not needed. Those men were only sent there, and kept there, for political purposes. And I cannot see how that line is going to pay back that interest.

The PREMIER: No regrading work is done unless it is recommended by the Chief Engineer for Railways.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The traffic has been going over that line for the past thirty years, and it has stood very well. There was much more traffic going over it before than there is to-day, and yet the Government send 500 men up there just before an election in order to regrade that line. The Treasurer may explain that in his own way, but the public believes that the money was spent for political purposes. That line will not pay interest for the money spent, and it will be a burden on posterity. I hope the Treasurer will take the opportunity of looking into that matter. The last speaker referred to the repatriation of the farmer. I know that for the last eight or nine months the farmers have lost money at the rate of £2,000,000 a year. Fully £1,000,000 has been lost by the farmers of Queensland during the last six months. There are

hundreds of these people who will not be able to start again. Some of them put their life savings into the land and into stock. Their stock have died, and to-day they have got nothing to start with. I would like to know from the Treasurer if he intends to assist these people to start again. Unfortunately, the Government members cannot see the importance of statements made about the men on the land. Only yesterday the hon. member for Bremer practically made fun of the losses of the people on the land. In many cases the farmers lost their life savings, and the hon. member for Bremer practically held them up to ridicule.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Refer to "Hansard."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member cannot see what a loss it means when the farmers lose £2,000,000 a year. Why, that £2,000,000 goes towards paying the hon. gentleman's salary. The hon. gentleman does not know that it is the farmers who are producing the wealth. The hon. gentleman is not a producer at all. The storekeeper is not a producer. He only turns it over. It is the same with the politicians. They are not producers, they only turn it over. The men who produce the wealth are the men on the land, and yet hon. members like the hon. member for Bremer ridicule them, although their stock are dying in thousands to-day. I know one place on the north coast where 350 dairy cows died as the result of one storm, yet we have city members ridiculing men like that.

Mr. HARTLEY: Where did those 350 cows die?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I can tell you if you want to know.

Mr. HARTLEY: You don't know.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Treasurer says that the Government put the burdens on the shoulders of those who can best bear them. I will give him an instance of a case where he is putting the burden on shoulders which cannot bear it. I have a receipt here which I will give to the Treasurer if he likes to inquire into it. This is the receipt for land tax paid on land which produced nothing for nine months. Will the Treasurer say that is putting the tax on the shoulders that can best bear it, when his land has not produced anything for nine months?

The PREMIER: What did it produce in a year?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: For the last nine months it has produced nothing, and for three months it has cost him £40 a week to keep his stock alive. In spite of that, the Treasurer's tax gatherer demands £17 13s. 4d. as land tax from this man whose land produced nothing for nine months.

The PREMIER: Did he apply for a remission of the tax?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Yes.

The PREMIER: What was the answer?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He got no answer at all.

The PREMIER: When did he apply?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On the 4th January, when he gave his cheque for the tax.

The PREMIER: Do you say that the Commissioner is not granting any remission?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am only giving you the facts. Clause 46 provides for a return, and a return is made. In nine cases

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out of ten, the Commissioner will, perhaps, return 25 or 30 per cent. of the money, but where land has produced nothing for nine months, and the owner has to spend £40 a week to keep his stock alive, there should be no land tax at all. So the Treasurer is wrong when he says that he is putting the tax on the shoulders that can best bear it.

The PREMIER: In the case you refer to it is possible that a full remission of the tax will be granted.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And it is also possible that he will get no remission at all. He made four applications last year before he got any return.

The PREMIER: Give me the particulars, and I will look into the case.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (handing the Premier a document): Here is the receipt. No. 255 is the number of the assessment. The man on the land has also to suffer other injustices. The Minister for Agriculture, perhaps with the best intentions, formed what are called dingo boards, but I will show how it adds to the burden of the man on the land. At one time 5s. was paid for each dingo scalp, but this was increased by the Government to £1. How can men pay the taxation when they have to pay £1 each for dingo scalps?

The PREMIER: The Opposition supported that measure.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No, they did not. I opposed it, for one. I said it was a wrong thing to do, and I said that £1 for a dingo scalp was a ridiculous thing. The man I referred to just now as having to pay £17 13s. 4d. for land tax has just received a bill for £3 9s. 1d. for dingo scalps. Is it a fair thing to keep accumulating these taxes on the men on the land, especially when their land is not producing anything?

The PREMIER: The Dingo Act was passed for the benefit of the farmers. That is the value of it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The value of the Dingo Act is for the men in the West who breed dingoes and sell the scalps. When I was up in Dalby the other day I was told that since the dingo scalps had been raised to £1 there are persons breeding them and selling the scalps.

Mr. HARTLEY: They are silly people.

At twenty minutes past 5 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is an industry which certainly ought not to be encouraged, and I hope the Treasurer will deal with it. As regards the spending of £4,000,000 of loan money every year, I might mention that when the Denham Government were in office the question was always raised as to how much loan money could be spent to the best advantage. In many cases, I know that the plans and specifications were not ready, and they found they were spending too much loan money. That meant a big waste of money. At that time they were spending £2,000,000 a year. If there was a waste of money then, we can easily see that when we are spending £4,000,000 a year, and paying 6½ per cent. interest, that a lot of that money will be wasted.

The PREMIER: That does not follow at all.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I ask the Treasurer, is it not a fact that a lot of that loan money has been spent on almost useless works? It has been spent on useless railway work

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in order to keep the unemployed going. That is only placing a big burden on posterity.

The PREMIER: What work do you refer to?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Cutting down the grades at Maryborough and other places.

The PREMIER: The railway authorities have been urging that work for economic reasons, so that the trains will carry bigger loads.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Then I have not much faith in our railway experts. If they see a slight curve they want to take it up and alter it. That work is absolutely unnecessary, especially when there are people living forty miles from a railway who want railway communication. It is much better to carry railways into the interior than spend money on lines we have already. A lot of this money is carrying a high rate of interest, and the money is being spent in order to keep men working around Brisbane.

The PREMIER: That is not true. It is the same sort of work that was done by your own party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In that way again we find that money has been wasted. Now, here is another thing. The Railway Department—this Government is not to blame any more than the past Governments, and I spoke of this matter six or seven years ago—have not given the men on the railways

[5.30 p.m.] the machinery and tools that they should give them to make the best use of their time and of their work. In many of these big cuttings—say for instance, the one outside Ipswich—instead of using a pick and shovel there was no reason whatever why we should not have had one of those steam shovels at work. I have had a good deal to do with machinery. There is not the slightest difficulty in getting one of those steam shovels attached to a traction engine without being compelled to keep it on the rails—it could be moved to any of these cuttings. You could give the men more money for their work, you would get three times as much work done for the money, and instead of building one mile of railway, you could possibly build many more. There is a tendency expressed on the other side that it is not a question of getting work done, or of building a lot of railways, but that it is the question of employing men. I maintain that it is not a question of employing men. It is a question of employing the men to the best advantage and giving them the machinery and tools that they can do the best and easiest work within the time, without all this heavy work. I have seen, under past Governments, as well as under this, men with a pick and shovel and wheelbarrow digging up trenches, digging up watercourses where you could have had a plough and a scoop. The work would have been much easier, and you would have had six times as much work done for the money.

Mr. JAMES (*Logan*): I wish to say a word or two on the question of Supply. I think that when the Government ask for more money to carry on, they ought to account in some measure, at any rate, for the money which they have had the spending of in the past, and in my opinion the state of the finances in Queensland is not all that could be desired. I think there is a great deal of room for improvement in the administration of affairs in the future. In this respect, I think the remarks of the hon. member for Drayton on the scant attention

which is given to the requirements of the country is very much to the point, because we find that in our land settlement and general development of the back country of Queensland, instead of there being a progression, there is a comparative decline—and a big one. The reason for this, in my opinion, is that the policy of the Government on land matters is not considered on its merits as adapted to the needs of the country, but more according to theories which have developed in the minds of political societies and theoretical students who seek to apply these theories without any consideration whatever of their adaptability to the requirements of the country. And amongst these I think we could include those two very prominent bones of contention—the monopoly of leasehold, and the land tax which was imposed by this Government in 1915. As a result, I think, mainly of the leasehold, we find a diminution in the areas selected. I would like first of all to point out that in the case of pastoral selections the leasehold principle naturally applies, and it has been carried into effect in New South Wales and Queensland, and any other States where pastoral industries flourish in a large way. It is the natural mode of occupation, but the Labour party have tried to apply this to all methods of selection, to all different modes of selection. We find that since 1914 there has been a decrease in land settlement. In 1914 there were 2,645 selections of all classes, with a total area of 8,096,689 acres. In 1918 the area has been reduced; there were 1,461 selections, total acreage 6,168,311. In that case the fact that the leasehold system is adapted to the pastoral industry accounts for the fact that there is not such a very great reduction—that is, considering various other causes—there is not such a tremendous reduction in the total area selected. But when we come to the perpetual lease selection, which took the place of the agricultural farm selections, we find that in 1914 there were 1,554 agricultural selections with a total acreage of 538,844 acres. In 1918 we see the number reduced to 898 selections with a total area of 305,873 acres. Then we come to the prickly-pear selections and find a great falling off. In 1914 there were 636 prickly-pear selections with a total acreage of 683,000; in 1918 there were only 178 selections, total acreage 153,151 acres. So that we see there is an absolute lack of confidence in land selection in Queensland. And when I was abroad recently, and mixed with soldiers considering land developments in the different States, and the opportunities offering for selection, I found there was a great prejudice against Queensland on the grounds that we have solely a leasehold system. We know that in many respects the leasehold system has an advantage over freehold. Where a man is poor but wants to select, he can do so more cheaply in leasehold than in freehold—that is generally recognised by agriculturists. But, on the other hand, a man with a leasehold farm takes less interest, and, from the standpoint of the State, he is more likely to give up that farm than if it were a freehold selection in which he had sunk a great deal of money. So that there is an obvious advantage and profit to the State by having the alternative of freehold selection whereby people will become more settled on the land, and take a greater interest in building up their holdings for their own benefit, because at the same time a benefit will accrue to the State.

Then, as regards the value held by the State, say, on soldier settlements such as Beerburrum—the amount of value the State has in that is very little, but the soldier, by means of his improvements, has perhaps 700 per cent. more in the selection than the State. He has no final say, but is bound hand and foot in every direction. Apart from the advantages or disadvantages of leasehold and freehold, I would like to ask, is it worth while sacrificing the settlement of Queensland to a theory of that sort? Would it not be better to try and attract to this State, as was done in 1914, a large number of selectors to take up our land, because that is the only way to make the railways pay, the only way to make this State what it should be according to natural resources, and what it would be if it were not mismanaged. While I am on this, I might refer in passing to the figures given to the hon. member for Carnarvon, in answer to his question regarding prickly-pear selections abandoned during recent years. We find that the number abandoned in 1919 was 319, as against 235 in 1915, which shows that there is a progressive increase in the number of prickly-pear selections being abandoned. It must be remembered also that in many cases—in most cases, in fact—the Agricultural Bank has lent money on these particular selections, and there is a loss to the people who have put their savings in the Savings Bank, because that money will never be regained: on the contrary, the prickly-pear is growing where grass should be growing, and instead of anything being produced, selections are being abandoned and the improvements all go by the board. This is a serious question, yet we have not heard of the Government taking any active steps in this biggest problem which is confronting Queensland at present. We have 20,000,000 acres of densely infested prickly-pear, growing at the rate of a million a year, but we find no move yet by the Government to either stem the growth of it or to eradicate that which we already have.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have not you heard of the establishment of the arsenic mines?

Mr. JAMES: That is apart from the fact that the Government take a great deal more interest in small businesses—

The HOME SECRETARY: It is something. What did your people do?

Mr. JAMES: My people? I have no people, excepting Logan electors. The point I am trying to make—and the Home Secretary is quite aware of it—is that this is our biggest problem, and the Government does not give it the place in the Government's programme which it should have; and whether any Government in the past has done it or not, should not make any difference. Here I might refer the Home Secretary to an article which recently appeared in the "Agricultural Journal" by another enthusiastic official such as those to whom I referred the other night, who really see the needs of this State, while the Government take no notice. This gentleman says that it is only a matter of a few years when the prickly-pear will have spread over the whole of Queensland, and this is a very serious state of affairs. And while the city workers continue in comparatively prosperous circumstances, they do not realise that their whole existence here depends on the prosperity of the back country. (Hear, hear!) Yet, while a Loan Fund is raised for the purchase of

State stations by means of debentures, we do not hear of such being done to deal with the prickly-pear problem. I think this is a matter that could well have the attention of the Government when considering this new loan, because they have not given reasonable attention to it in the past. And if we continue, we will find that this inactivity and abandonment of the interests of the primary producer is accentuated by a strong tendency to tax land far more than that land can afford to pay. In my opinion, where land is used as a means of production—used up to the full extent—there is no excuse for taxation at all. Whereas in other respects where, perhaps, city lands have an unearned increment, an increase in value to which the owners do not contribute, there is very good grounds for land tax. But where an increased value has accrued to the landowners due to their own work, and their own initiative, there is no excuse. I remember in Gippsland, my native State, in Victoria, my grandfathers started the development of the land in their home, they were eventually forced to abandon it, and the very selections that they held were taken up by their sons in the next generation. They worked it, and only to-day, after three generations, is that land really what you might call profitable. The work of three generations of the one family has been devoted to the building up of those blocks, and when it is remembered that they are only of a nominal value now—the value being nothing as compared to the energy and initiative put into those selections in the past—it will be seen that where land is used to its full extent there is absolutely no excuse for heavy land taxation. The Government recognise that to a certain extent, because they are giving relief to the extent of an unimproved value of £750 on agricultural lands. But they absurdly adhere to a nominal exemption of £300 in order to conform to the theory to which I referred. People who read Henry George, and swallow him holus bolus, think there is nothing else on earth. They desire an exemption of £300, and thus give the selector all the trouble and expense of making out land tax returns, when he should not make them out at all up to an unimproved value of £750. If a real expression of opinion were given by hon. members supporting the Government, we would find quite a variety of views, and while members of the Labour party may be supposed to conform to the Labour platform in its entirety, I do not think you would find one member supporting the Government who, plank by plank, would support the whole of that platform.

Mr. COLLINS: Why did you sign that platform?

Mr. JAMES: I signed that platform with a full knowledge that I did not believe in the whole platform, and I defy the Treasurer to say that he agrees with the whole of the platform. In all matters we should have a sense of proportion, because there is no such thing as absolute right or absolute wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have a sense of proportion, all right.

Mr. JAMES: I have, and if the Secretary for Railways had a little more, perhaps the railways would not be in such a disgraceful position as they are at the present time. The Secretary for Railways, in common with hon. members on this side, will agree that there are more employees in the Railway Department than are necessary to carry them

on efficiently, effectively, and at a minimum of cost, and at the present time freights and fares are being increased inordinately, at the expense of the primary producer, to support the system or lack of system.

The HOME SECRETARY: What about your Domain speeches a few years ago?

Mr. JAMES: I think I spoke in the Domain about four years ago, and I have spoken in more domains than that of Queensland, and I expressed my honest convictions, and I am expressing my honest convictions now, which is more than the Home Secretary usually does.

The HOME SECRETARY: How can you have convictions when you keep changing your opinions every day?

Mr. JAMES: How can a man have convictions without occasional modification unless his mind is a rusty mass not capable of having any opinion at all? The Home Secretary will agree that the enervating effect of sitting behind a Government such as the machine-ruled Government that we have at the present time in Queensland is likely to lead the mind to that condition of incapacity which we find so often expressed where the mouth is larger than the brains. (Opposition laughter and interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. JAMES: I thank you, Mr. Smith, for endeavouring to maintain order, because I realise the disorder is more than usual, for what reasons hon. members opposite must be aware of. The only thing I can think of is that my criticisms hurt them rather badly—(Government laughter)—and that they are unable to stand a straight out-expression of opinion on matters which they bring before the country. I have no hesitation in saying that, so far as I can see, the Labour party have lost their objective, and if they are going to succeed, they will have to get on to more rational lines; cut out their cast-iron theory of socialism by nationalisation, which is about on a level with the whole hog single tax, which is evidently supported by the hon. member for Bowen, and come round to a more humanitarian view of things.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Look at the grinning Cheshires over there.

Mr. JAMES: I notice a smile on the face of the Minister for Railways. I do not know whether he calls it a grin or not, or whether it is facial contortion on the part of the hon. member. I was merely stating that, in my opinion, the Labour party have lost their objective. They have set themselves to carry out a machine-like programme which is not likely to help the working people out of the wilderness. They raise false hopes in the minds of the wage-earners, who bind themselves together in unions in support of this Government in the hope that they will be led out of the wilderness, but they find they do not get out at all. The Labour party having itself set up with Godlike qualities is likely, in the future, to be found to be an idol of clay, and will be smashed by the very people who put them in power. I now see no smile on the face of the Secretary for Railways, as he realises that what I say is correct. I do not think his mind moves on cast-iron lines. I think he has a certain mobility of mentality, but it is obvious that he, too, works like a little machine, does what he is told, and as long as he does that he may remain for a time

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Secretary for Railways, but sooner or later his party and his political life will be smashed for good.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hence your position over there.

Mr. JAMES: I might remind the hon. gentleman that I did not come here seeking a haven of safety. I came here because I absolutely believe in the opinions I have expressed. I do not know whether the supporters of the Government are sincere in saying I had personal motives for coming across to this side, because there were absolutely no motives of a personal character. So far as signing the platform is concerned, I have already stated that when I signed the platform I believed most of it was for the best.

Mr. RIORDAN: Did you strike out what you did not believe in?

Mr. JAMES: I did not.

Mr. RIORDAN: I believe in all of it.

Mr. JAMES: The hon. member accepts unthinkingly that which is given him. To set these disputes at rest, and since it has been said I have simply come over here so that after the next election I can still remain member for Logan on a different party ticket, I would like to ask any of those hon. members who are interjecting whether they are prepared to resign their seats and come and contest the Logan against me?

Mr. COLLINS: Most Labour rats get back the first time.

Mr. JAMES: Will the hon. member for Bowen come out and oppose me?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. RIORDAN: You had a challenge the other night.

Mr. JAMES: The hon. member should know me well enough by now to know that I generally take my own time about things, and do things in my own way. I might say that I have no desire to hold the Logan on false pretences, and I realise, having got into Parliament by supporting the Labour platform, that my continuance here as representative of the Logan on the Labour platform would be under false pretences. I have not two thoughts about that, and I quite agree with hon. members, but I do not agree with the bad temper in which they indulge when my criticisms fall on their fortresses. Hon. members the other night were very willing to throw out their challenges, whilst now they are quiet.

Mr. RIORDAN: They are absent.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to deal with the motion.

Mr. JAMES: I am dealing generally with bad government, and the position of the finances is the result of bad government, and when hon. members supporting the Government interject, I think I have a right to reply. I would like to ask the Treasurer, since he remarked the other night by interjection that I had broken all my pledges, whether he would be willing to resign his fraction of an electorate at Chillagoe, and come down and contest the full-grown electorate of Logan?

The PREMIER: I hope when I do contest the next election, that I won't be up against a pitiable creature such as you.

Mr. JAMES: The Treasurer maintains the dignity of his high office by indulging in abusive language.

The CHAIRMAN indicated that the time allowed the hon. member under the Standing Orders had expired.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I hope when the Premier goes home that an amount of money will be secured to keep Queensland going in the way it should go. He must realise that there is no possible hope of a large number of people carrying on unless they get assistance. He must realise that the credit of a large number of people who live in the country has been absolutely taken away from them by the actions of the Government, and when we find that the people have lost their stock, and are absolutely on the rocks to-day, it is the duty of the Government to render them assistance. Nobody is prepared to lend them any money on the security available. The security was there a few years ago, but the Government have taken that security away, and it is up to them now to find some method by which these people are again able to start to produce. They have been hard hit by the drought, and it is no good thinking that the Act passed last session is going to help these people to start again, because it is not.

Mr. GUNN: They are going to give them arsenic. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: A large number of them would be only too pleased to take arsenic if the present Administration keeps in power much longer. We must recognise that when the Government takes away a man's credit, some responsibility rests with the Government. The Treasurer must recognise that the land tax has taken away their assets. I am sure that no Government in Queensland wants to see a large rural population practically forced off the land or into the position of taking arsenic. That may be a matter for jesting amongst the members of the front Ministerial bench, but if they had a little experience of the Downs and other districts where the drought has been so bad and the losses so heavy, they would realise that some assistance has to be found for the people in the country, as well as for the unemployed in the cities.

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

Mr. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Before we come to a vote on this question, I notice the Minister for Public Works is present, and I would like to impress upon him the necessity of giving some consideration to the question of the registration of unemployed and the system of distribution. Considerable railway work has just been commenced in Toowoomba, and within the last few days there has been a dispute in connection with the men employed. First of all, this work was started with some thirty men from Brisbane, while it was fully known to the Labour Bureau in Toowoomba, the chief bureau in Brisbane, and the Railway Department that there were at least 150 men unemployed in the city of Toowoomba. Since then that difficulty to some extent has been got over. As far as the men sent from Brisbane were concerned, when it was pointed out to them that there were unemployed in Toowoomba, they did the fair thing by their mates, although they were putting themselves to some inconvenience. When they left Brisbane instructions had evidently gone before them that if these men for any reason ceased work no railway passes would be issued to them to enable them to return to their homes in Brisbane. Since then other

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men have been sent to Toowoomba. I ask the Minister if he will take into consideration the regulations which were fairly administered by his predecessor, the present Premier, who laid down very fully that men should not be sent to centres where already there were unemployed. I hope the Minister will see that men are not sent to Toowoomba or any other district to undertake employment when there are men of that description equally able, willing, and looking for work.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to a resolution. The report was adopted and the Committee obtained leave to sit again tomorrow.

WAYS AND MEANS.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER: I beg to move—

“That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty on account of the services of the year 1919-20, there be granted a further sum not exceeding £1,400,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account, £150,000 from the Trust and Special Funds, and £600,000 from the Loan Fund Account.”

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the sitting.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 4.

ALL STAGES.

The resolutions were agreed to, and a Bill founded on them was brought in, passed through all stages without debate, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

DAIRY PRODUCE BILL.

CONSIDERATION IN COMMITTEE OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR'S PROPOSED AMENDMENT.

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

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Bacham*): I beg to move that the amendment recommended by His Excellency the Governor be agreed to. His Excellency recommends that clause 35 be omitted from the Bill. Members will see that clause 35 relates to the restriction of certain labour. The clause passed by Parliament is not in accord with certain Imperial despatches. I am sure the Committee do not want the details of those despatches. At the suggestion of His Excellency, that clause has been redrafted, and is now made to apply to persons who have not obtained a certificate that they are able to read and write from dictation fifty words in the English language. The Governor in Council may make regulations for the examination and granting of certificates and for the exemption from the

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operation of this section of any person whom it is not considered necessary to examine. This clause is on all-fours with the clause in the Sugar Cultivation Act of 1913. I therefore move—

“That the Committee approve of His Excellency's recommendation, that clause 35 be deleted, and the new clause appearing in the message be inserted.”

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had agreed to the amendments suggested by His Excellency the Governor.

The report was adopted, and the Bill ordered to be forwarded to the Legislative Council, with the following message:—

“Mr. President,

“His Excellency the Governor having transmitted by message to the Legislative Assembly the following amendment which he desires to be made in the Dairy Produce Bill, viz:—

“Omit clause 35 and insert in lieu thereof—

“Certain labour restricted.—No person who has not first obtained in the prescribed manner a certificate that he is able to read and write from dictation words in the English language of not less than fifty words shall be employed in or take part in the working of any registered dairy produce premises under a penalty of one pound for each such person for every day during which such person is employed in or takes part in the working of such premises.

“The Governor in Council may, from time to time, make regulations—

(i.) For the examination and granting of certificates of ability to read and write from dictation words in the English language;

(ii.) For the exemption from the operation of this section of any persons or classes of persons whom for any reason it is not considered necessary to examine.”

“The Legislative Assembly have agreed to the amendment proposed by His Excellency, and now forward it to the Legislative Council for their concurrence.”

WAYS AND MEANS.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT—RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): In discussing the Treasurer's Financial Statement, which we had presented to us last week, there are some things, of course, which must strike one in that Statement. One of the things that one notes is the fact that during the period of the present Labour Administration there has been a very marked and very considerable increase in the amount of money received by the Government, yet, notwithstanding the fact that these large increases of money have been received, we are faced year after year with a deficit in the public accounts. Various reasons have been given by the Treasurer as to how these deficits have been created. To a certain extent in some directions he may be correct, but in a number of instances I certainly think the deficits are the result of bad administration

on the part of the Treasurer in connection with public funds. We have been told, during the course of this debate, how on a number of occasions the Treasurer has told us what is the secret of good government. He has told us that to a very great extent good government consists of good financing. He has said, on more than one occasion, that the finances should balance year by year. Yet, we find that although we had an expanding revenue on every occasion, still we are faced by a deficit. There are a good number of reasons given by the Treasurer as to how the deficits have taken place. One reason was that on one or two occasions the Legislative Council did not pass the legislation which he introduced and which he considered necessary in order that he might pay his way. If the rejection of legislation by the Legislative Council had been done in some underhand or unknown way of which the Treasurer knew nothing at all, and if it had been sprung upon him in the nature of a surprise, we might be able to look upon his excuse as having fairly good ground; but, in carrying out his duties, the Treasurer knew perfectly well that certain things had been done by the Council, and he was called upon in the administration of his department to see that the expenditure was kept within a reasonable limit. We should not be faced with deficits such as we have been faced with in the past few years. I am not one of those individuals who cry stinking fish about deficits. I know that deficits have been made, and probably they will be made in the future, but when there is really no valid excuse for deficits—and I claim there is no reason for them at the present time—I certainly think that in some directions the Treasurer has failed in his work. We have been told that because of the rejection of certain measures by the Legislative Council that unemployment has arisen and that the revenue has suffered to a great extent in consequence. I challenge the statement with regard to the fact that unemployment has been caused by reason of any legislation which the Legislative Council has turned down. Last year an Unemployment Bill was introduced by the Government. What did it propose to do? Was it a measure which would reduce unemployment? I consider it was rather a measure which would tend to create unemployment. I believe that has been exactly what has resulted throughout Queensland during the last four years, or, at all events, during the last twelve months, in connection with the Labour administration of the finances of this country. If you are going, by your taxation methods and by the expenditure of public money, to create a feeling of unrest amongst the farming and producing community and amongst those engaged in the manufacturing and secondary industries of this State, can it be expected that these industries will prosper and that employment will be plentiful throughout the country? That is just exactly the position as we find it in Queensland to-day. The proposal in that unemployment measure was not to create employment, but rather to penalise employers who were employing labour throughout the length and breadth of Queensland. In addition to the ordinary taxation that they have to pay, which hon. members opposite admit is heavy, and which they will have to continue to pay for some considerable time, our manufacturers were asked to pay £2 for every employee engaged by them in work of any

kind. Can such a proposal be justified? The people who are helping to find employment and who are keeping men employed in this State were going to be further penalised and further taxed, while the employers and manufacturers throughout the Commonwealth were going to have that advantage over our own manufacturers in the production of the various goods we manufacture in the State to-day. We all know perfectly well that, so far as Queensland is concerned, our manufacturers in Queensland, for many years, have had an uphill fight in order to compete with the Southern manufacturers. What have the Government done to assist the manufacturers in Queensland? We find, in answer to questions, that the Government have been sending the State hides out of the State. I remember the complaints that hon. members opposite used to make about sending our products overseas as raw material instead of manufacturing in this State. Yet we find the Government are sending the hides out of the State from the State stations. Nothing has been done to assist our primary producers in any shape or form. With regard to the timber industry, we were told that when the State embarked in the timber business that the people of Queensland were not receiving a fair deal from the sawmillers and timber merchants throughout Queensland. We were told that the people were being charged too much for the timber they required and which was necessary to erect their homes. Have we found any change since this Government has been in power in connection with the cheapening of the price of timber for the building of homes for the people of Queensland? No, quite the opposite. We find, instead of retaining the timbers of Queensland for the people of Queensland, that the State Government did exactly the same as the timber merchants were doing, and they exported to the Southern States every foot of timber which they could dis-

[7.30 p.m.] pose of at a satisfactory figure.

Yet hon. members in this Chamber will get up and tell us what great things the Government has done for the working men of this country. When we know that such things as that have been taking place in Queensland we might well ask ourselves: Have the Government played the game in a fair and square manner by the workmen of this country? I contend that they have not. They have made charges now for years against previous Administrations as to what they have done in this direction, yet immediately they get the opportunity they adopt the selfsame tactics about which they have been complaining for many years. A charge has been made during the course of this debate about the purchase of a German dredge and the erection of German bridges. Quite true. But not a word has been said about the fact that the Treasurer of the present Government paid in New South Wales between £30,000 and £40,000 for a trawler to fish in the Queensland waters, while at the very same time they held a tender for the erection and completion of that trawler by a firm engaged in business in Brisbane.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That statement was completely disproved.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: At any rate, it was our own Australians we got it from; not Germans.

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Mr. TAYLOR: That statement was not disproved. Hon. members know it perfectly well, and although the Treasurer made certain excuses in connection with the building of that trawler, the fact remains that the tender was received, and the only acknowledgment the firm got was the return of their deposit cheque and the usual departmental note that their tender could not be accepted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were not very keen on it.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is very evident that if they were not keen the Government were less keen, because if the Government were sincere in their desire to provide work for the workman of Queensland, when they received that tender, even supposing that there might have been conditions which the Government could not approve of, they could have made some attempt to bring the parties together to see if that trawler could have been built in the State, but this they did not do.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They would not specify a time.

Mr. TAYLOR: They specified a time, and the time which the Government accepted from New South Wales was exceeded by about eight or nine months.

The PREMIER: No; they did not specify a time.

Mr. TAYLOR: If they did not specify a time, the Treasurer stated in this Chamber the month in which he expected delivery of the trawler from New South Wales, which was October, and he got it either in March or April. The Premier specifically stated in reply to the arguments at that time that it was to be delivered within about two or three months of time specified by the firm of Evans, Anderson, and Phelan. That firm have works at Kangaroo Point capable of employing several hundred men, and at the particular time that the tender was sent in they employed about three or four boys and, I think, something like half a dozen men. There was an opportunity for the Government to have helped the workers of Queensland had they so chosen, but they sent to New South Wales and purchased this particular trawler.

A good deal of discussion has taken place in connection with our railways. What I have to say is this: What the Government have done during the last week or two in connection with fares and freights they should have done two or three years ago, and I am not afraid to state it here. I stated previously, in answer to an interjection, that so far as the country people were concerned, I would let them down as light as possible regarding fares and freights, and would take all sorts of care that the people of the large cities and towns should pay a greater proportion of the expense of running the railways than they have been doing for many years. (Hear, hear!) I take it that we have to look at things in a reasonable and sensible light, and we know that during the last four or five years the increases in wages alone to railway employees is, as we have been told, something like £1,000,000, and we also know there has been a considerable increase in the cost of all kinds of stores required to run our railways. £1,500,000 deficit on our railways year after year is no good to Queensland nor any State; and however or wherever the deficit may be made,

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the fact remains that the people of Queensland have to make up that money somehow sooner or later, and the sooner they realise that it is not the intention of the Government to run the railways as a purely philanthropic affair, but that they must be expected to pay a reasonable amount of the taxation required to carry on the business of the country, the better. If what has been done recently had been done three years ago we should have had no deficit to-day. We are told that the increased revenue which the Government expect to receive by the increased fares and freights will amount to £500,000 per annum. Judging from the returns which are furnished of the number of miles of railway that are open, the train mileage which is run, and the various other figures that we have been given, I certainly think that some improvement could be made to reduce the cost price of running those railways. If the railways are overstaffed, I think that profitable avenues could be found for any men who may have to be displaced on account of a rearrangement. I say that some of the charges made for carrying goods on the railways are simply absurd. You could not get a man with a horse and dray to take a load across the road for what the railway has been carrying goods from Brisbane for 10, 15, or 20 miles. That is not a businesslike and common-sense way of carrying on a big business concern such as our railways. We look upon them as the best asset in this country. We look upon their control by the Government as being the best control in the interests of the whole of the people of Queensland. Owing to the fact that railways have been built into unproductive centres and have not paid, and will not pay probably for some considerable time, the deficit on those railways has to be made up, and, although I do not expect that the railways should pay every penny of the amount of interest, I certainly think that an interest return of under 14s. is simply absurd.

A good deal was said last night about the Treasurer having stated last year that the amount of deficit was going to be paid out of the revenue of 1918-1919. That, of course, was not done, and when the charge has been made here in connection with that matter, the Treasurer has repeatedly asked in what other way he could have applied the money. He said, if the amount of revenue received for that particular year had been over and above the expenditure and sufficient to meet that deficit, it would have been applied in that direction, but so long as there was a deficit on the year's working that money could not be so applied. Well, if the Treasurer knew that, why did he not tell us when he first made this statement? Why did he want to say it was going to be done in a certain way, and then, when the figures come along, and we find that the revenue did not come up to his anticipation, nothing was done, and the deficit is still there?

My opinion with regard to taxation is this: Queensland is a young country; Australia is a big country; taxation must increase if population increases and development is to be gone on with. (Hear, hear!) The standard of comfort is being raised every week and every year right throughout the whole of Queensland and Australia, and as we wish to see Queensland develop and its industries expand, I take it that it is an absolute necessity in the growth of this country that there shall be a certain

increase in taxation. But when we come to consider the enormous increase that has been made since the Labour Government has been in power, we ask ourselves, has the money which they have been receiving from the various sources of taxation been judiciously applied and expended? No doubt, in quite a number of instances, it has; but we contend that in quite a number of instances it has not. And I would say, in connection with most of the State enterprises, it has simply been a diversion of public money, in many instances made at a loss, and which has not done any good nor helped to develop the State. Take, for instance, the fish industry. We all like fish, but we do not get very much of it. And, as I have stated before, most of the fish that a good many of us get is fish out of the tin, and that tin comes from overseas. Indeed, I take it, whether we have fish or not, we are just as healthy and fit. I look upon fish as being rather a luxury than a necessity of modern life, and I certainly think an immense amount of public money has been, and is being, wasted so long as that industry is allowed to continue.

The same applies to State stations. I have nothing to say against the State having stations, but the one regrettable feature is this: instead of the Government increasing the supply of cattle, they have simply bought stations and displaced existing cattle-holders. It appears to me they have not increased the number of cattle one bit, although they have any amount of fine territories throughout the State. I should like to see Queensland the butcher's shop for the whole world, and I do not see any reason why it should not be, nor do I see any reason why the Government should not assist in attaining that end; but the way we are going on at present, to my mind, certainly is not going to do that. We have had certain figures placed before us in connection with this particular industry which tells us that a profit of, I think, something like £40,000 or £50,000 has been made on the State stations during the past year. In analysing those figures, the hon. member for Carnarvon the other night showed that had the present State stations been in the hands of private owners, instead of showing, as they did in the statement of the Auditor-General, a profit of between £40,000 and £50,000, they would actually have shown a loss of between £4,000 and £5,000. The hon. member showed that had those stations been run by the individuals who possessed them prior to the Government taking them over, they would have had to pay income tax, land tax, and quite a number of other taxes, and that if those taxes had been paid by the Government, the State stations would have shown a loss. Those figures can be verified, or they can be shown to be untrue, and I certainly think that if those figures are correct, it is time the Government went out of the State station business and took on something else which would prove of a more remunerative nature.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: And let the squatters have it to themselves and put up the price of meat.

Mr. TAYLOR: There is one thing that hon. members on the Government side cannot deny, and that is, that prior to 1915 the cost of living was infinitely less than it is to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so all over the world.

Mr. TAYLOR: If the Government had allowed a natural state of affairs to continue, we should not have had the high prices which exist to-day. The statement has been made that the rate of wage paid to railway employees in 1914 was such that the railway men could not live decently. Does any hon. member on that side of the House dare to say that, even with the present increase in wages which the railway men have received, that they are as well or better off than they were in 1914?

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Yes.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am sorry that the hon. member should say that, as I do not think he really believes it, because every man knows that for what a man could get for a sovereign in 1914 it would require £1 6s. or £1 7s. to-day. Yet, when the Denham Government were in power, they were accused of sweating the railway worker.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: So they did.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Denham Government paid the railway workers a princely wage compared to what they are getting from the present Government, and hon. members know that perfectly well. We have the Treasurer's estimate of revenue and expenditure for the present year, and he has stated that he expects a surplus of something over £4,000 on the year's work. I do not know how he expects to get it, because he tells us on page 16 of the Statement that the Commonwealth Government contemplates, during the present year, reducing the per capita allowance by 2s. 6d. a year, and for twelve months that will mean for Queensland a sum of £94,000 odd. That means that for this half of the present financial year we shall receive probably £47,000 less from the Commonwealth Government, and the per capita allowance will be reduced each year until it only amounts to 10s. per head. What provision is the Treasurer making for a loss of revenue such as that? We find no provision made at all. He is quite willing to go on spending money in an extravagant way on quite a number of enterprises which are not in the best interests of the people of Queensland. We have the spectacle of the State iron and steel works.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: He wants to square the finances.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think he has got them into tangle instead of squaring them. It is a sort of maze or puzzle, and it will take some squaring up before the Treasurer is done with it. The Treasurer has stated that he expects to spend out of loan moneys a sum of £4,000,000. He has been converted in connection with this loan expenditure. In "Hansard," cxiv., page 46, the Treasurer (Mr. Theodore) has this to say with regard to the Denham Government—

"The Government has come to a sane way of thinking and has decided to spend only £2,000,000 a year."

Now the Treasurer is going to spend over £4,000,000, and attempted to justify it after the criticisms which were hurled at the Denham Government on account of the increasing expenditure of loan money. He said they were getting sane, and I suppose if the Denham Government had become sane at that particular time we must argue that the present Government are becoming insane on account of what they propose to spend during the present year. We know that, as far as the Commonwealth is concerned, they have got to face an enormous expenditure.

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There has been the most disastrous drought that has ever existed in this country, and as a consequence of that drought when the figures come in for the income tax return and for quite a number of other returns, the Government will find that the Estimates which we have been considering during the present week will not be realised, and that there will be a very much greater shortage than they are inclined to anticipate. We all know that, and we all know that, so far as the Commonwealth Government is concerned, an immense amount of money has to be raised in order to carry out its obligations. We know the immense amount of money that has to be found in connection with the gratuity to soldiers, and no one grumbles at that. Everyone throughout the Commonwealth recognises that if there is one section of the community that deserves well of the people of Australia it is the men who went away and fought for us in France and in other parts of the world. Having that knowledge that this money has to be raised, it is only right and proper that the Treasurer should look round and see how it is possible, without impairing efficiency and without creating unemployment, to best spend the money received during the present year so that the greatest good may result to our country. I certainly think that proper consideration has not been given in the Financial Statement to the probabilities and possibilities of the future. If we want to set the clock back, we might as well go on a jamboree, spending as hard as we possibly can. Of course, if the world had ended as was predicted the other day, we would have got out of our debts, but the world has not ended, and we want to do all we can to develop the State. The primary industries have suffered and are suffering because of the drought, and if we had had a few more weeks of the drought there would not have been very many men left on the land. And in the light of taxation the man on the land is not considered so much as the man in the city. The Government tell us they are full of sympathy for the man on the land; that they want to lift the burdens off him, but instead of lifting the burdens off him they are crushing him down with taxation of one form or another, so that he hardly knows where he is, and at the end of the year, when he comes to make up his figures—if he has got any to make up—he finds he has been working fifteen or sixteen hours a day for the benefit of the people in the city. I certainly think the man on the land should have greater consideration shown to him than is shown to the man in the city. If the man on the land has a taxable income of £600, and a man in the city like myself or anyone else has a taxable income of £600, I contend that the man in the country who has earned that £600 has done a jolly sight more for Queensland than the man in the city. He has helped to push it along. He has helped to advance the State. He has paid more in railway freights and in other ways, and is entitled to a greater consideration than he gets. Instead of that, we find that at every turn he is being harassed and troubled by inspectors and by various forms of taxation which are not fair and which are not in the best interests of agriculture.

I would like now to refer to the appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor, and I would like to say that the Government have created what I think is a very dangerous precedent indeed, which may or may not react on any Government that may be in power in the

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future. If we are to continue to have Governors, I prefer infinitely more the system which has been in existence in the past rather than the one introduced within the last fortnight. I certainly think that it is in the best interests of Queensland that, so far as possible, we should get a man free from party bias. I do not say you will get a man absolutely free from party bias. The man who has no party feelings is a petty man. He is not a man at all. Every man, in a greater or lesser degree, must have certain party views, but, so far as we possibly can, we want to guard against party Governors and party Government such as is likely to result from the recent appointment that has been made.

Mr. BUTLER (*Lockyer*): I think that the Financial Statement affords a splendid opportunity for members to discuss a subject that otherwise would not be mentioned, and the person responsible for the institution should have the thanks of all private members. The Financial Statement discloses the stability of the finances of Queensland. The loan, which, unfortunately, a few people in Queensland would like to have seen a failure, I am pleased to say, was a great success. It goes to prove that those controlling the money markets of the world are of the opinion that we have a stable Government in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BUTLER: Holding the opinions I hold, I would like to add that I do not know whether it augurs as well, for the change in the social system I would like to see as some might think. Many big problems face us which, sooner or later, will have to be dealt with, and I think the present Government are the Government who ought to deal with them. I think one of the biggest questions is that of conserving the water in Queensland. (Hear, hear!) For years past, right up to the present month, at election time we have spoken of the necessity for tackling the question of water conservation, and periodically we suffer from the dread effects of drought. I am of the opinion that only a few realise what a really bad drought means to the people on the land in Queensland. I know by reading, and also by experience, that this House is not the place for too much sentiment. At least, so we are told. But I have witnessed sights in the Lockyer district during the last drought which, had they been told to me, I would have thought the person telling me was exaggerating. I know men who have seldom had any result for their labour. Feed gives out, the bank puts in a note about interest, the storekeeper cannot continue his credit. In some instances I know of the man goes out of his farm with the words, "To be sold by public auction" burning in his mind pictures of the future. All this is due to the criminal folly and incapacity of those who could do something. I know that the Governments of other days failed to tackle this question. I know that the present Government's system of statecraft does not easily lend itself to big schemes of this kind. In spite of this, the present Government could do more than they have done.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Where are they going to get the money from?

Mr. BUTLER: We get money for everything else we want. We are able to negotiate a £2,000,000 loan quite easily.

Mr. FRY: They said they could get more.

Mr. BUTLER: I think we could get more. Even if a big scheme involving many millions could not be entered upon, why should not the Government consider installing irrigation plants to approved farmers in approved districts on long terms? Such a scheme as this is, I think, one which should commend itself to the Secretary for Agriculture and to the Government. I think it would well repay the Government, and would be a wonderful benefit to the people of the State. Nearly every other State in Australia has tackled this question.

Mr. COLLINS: Don't forget the big Inker-man irrigation scheme started by this Government.

Mr. BUTLER: I would remind hon. members that I am not forgetting anything the Government have done, and say they intend to do, but I have been in Queensland long enough to have heard from public platforms, and to have read in the Press, times without number, what is going to be done in this way; and I have lived here long enough to have witnessed drought after drought, and to know that up to the present nothing like what should have been done has been done. In my opinion, it is time we really got a hurry on in this matter, and did not allow other matters which are of less importance to take up the time they are taking up.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BUTLER: Regarding the railways, I would like to say I wish to enter my protest against certain of the increases which I do not think are justifiable at this time. My own personal opinion is that the circumstances warranted the Government showing another deficit if necessary. Regarding the profiteering question, during the Federal election I said—and I meant it—that the Federal Government failed to do what might have been done with the wonderful machinery at their disposal. The people of Australia have not been protected against the profiteer. I would like to see the present Government use the machinery at their disposal, and attempt to do something. I would like to know what the unionists are doing at this time. Why have we not big uprisings on the part of the unionists against this increased taxation that has been placed upon them? Why do not we have demonstrations from the unionists, who most of all are feeling the burden of the high prices? If necessary, I would like to see the Government leading the demonstrations. Regarding State enterprises generally, criticism can be levelled at the administration in certain directions. Hard as it may be to believe, the members of the Government are human. Mistakes probably have been made. What I would like to say very deliberately regarding State enterprises is this: that the Government have shown that they are genuine, that they meant what they said when they promised State enterprises. The unionist, in my opinion, is not keeping as faithfully as he might have done his part of the contract. A good deal of fault can be found with many of those who are supposed to hold State enterprise principles, who are employed in our State enterprises. I believe in the control of industry by the men employed in the industry, and I think some of the State enterprises would be a good ground for a trial of such a scheme. But, unless unionists are prepared to accept the responsibilities which authority brings—either the individual or the union—I would strenuously oppose

any introduction of the idea. I want to say that up to the present I do not think unionists have shown any desire to undertake the responsibilities such a scheme would involve, and I think it is time some of the union leaders recognised that, although the Government have a big responsibility in State enterprises, unionists employed in State enterprises have an equal responsibility. Regarding the Government soldiers' settlements, I have a little criticism I would like to offer regarding the Beerburum Soldiers' Settlement. The present state of affairs at Beerburum is such that, unless there is a drastic change in the administration and the management, the scheme cannot possibly be a success. I have definite personal knowledge of that of which I speak. A man goes up to Beerburum. He alights at the station. He finds his way to the office. His papers are in order. The gentleman in the office says, "Yes, Lot No. 651 is vacant; you will find it away down the road. Follow the blazed track." He spends a day in the bush, and probably returns to the station and takes the train to Caboolture, as a couple of young fellows did a week or two ago whom I met in Caboolture, without finding Block 651. Anyway, they find their block, and they decide they will tackle making a living on the land. They are sent out on to their block, and they can go on there, whether they have had experience or not, in their own sweet way. They do not get proper supervision. They do not get the assistance that they ought to get from those who started the scheme. They do not get the expert opinion, the expert advice, right on their farms that they need; and, unless they get this, the Beerburum scheme must, in my opinion, fail. A few other minor matters, I think, easily could be rectified which might be mentioned. One is the class of house which is being built for those brave boys (for whom nothing was too good when they went to the front) on the soldiers' settlement. One of the last houses put up on the last but one block coming to Brisbane would make quite a respectable fowlhouse. The house is not level. The tank got full of water, and instantly toppled over. There is not a stump straight. You can put your fingers through the cracks in the veranda anywhere, and I should not be surprised at all if you could get a good view of the sky from any angle in any of the rooms at any time of the night or day. The reason of this is simply that the direct administration is lacking in something. That house was built and was paid for with money borrowed by the selector. He has to pay it back. I think we should not forget this. This house is not being given to him by some kindly disposed person. He will get a statement which shows that he owes so much to somebody for this house. What I would like to see at Beerburum is a greater personal interest taken in the men. I would like to see more expert advice available for those on the settlement. I believe if this were done the men on the settlement would respond.

Mr. FRY: It is quite essential that they get it, otherwise there will be disaster.

Mr. BUTLER: I hope the Government will do this. I hope they will consider a scheme that I know would be favourable to and would assist those settlers very much—that is, undertaking to cash the war gratuity bonds for all settlers. Every soldiers' settlement should be represented by one of its

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ected members on the land settlement committee. (Hear, hear!) I think they should have a voice on the boards that decide very largely their destinies. Regarding the Federal elections, I just want to say again, as, unfortunately, I had to say before, that I regret that a good many of the citizens in Queensland were deprived of their votes during the last Federal election. I hope, now that peace has been ratified, that all these things will be put right. I sat the other day and listened to the hon. member for Logan telling this House why he left the Labour party. I would like to say I regret his loss to the party on personal grounds, but after hearing his explanation, certainly not on political grounds. I consider his criticism of the Government was weak, and I fail to see why it could not have been made by him as a member of the Government. The idea, because a man is a member of the Government and a member of the Labour party, that he is bound by some remarkably strong bond and must not utter a word of criticism or put forth one idea that does not agree with the party leaders is all wrong. The idea that a man who sits on this side of the Chamber is bound hand and foot, as the hon. member for Logan knows full well, is quite untrue.

Mr. WHITFORD: Absolutely.

Mr. BUTLER: I have spoken several times in this House—and I thank the gods that it has only been a few times—and I have not delayed the business of this Chamber since I have been here. Every time I have spoken I have been freely allowed to state my opinions on anything the Government was doing or intended to do, and no party leader has ever suggested to me what I should say on any particular subject. (Hear, hear!) Personally, I would not allow any party leader to dictate to me as to what I should say or how I should vote on any particular question. In my opinion, the members on this side of the House are more free than members opposite. We enjoy more freedom than the hon. member for Logan and his colleagues on the other side of the House. If we are bound, we are bound as that great Italian patriot liked to be bound—that others may be free.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BUTLER: This leads me to say that I have no word of abuse to offer to the hon. member for Logan for taking the action he has taken, but I want to say quite frankly that I consider too much of our time has been taken up in abuse when we should have been advocating our platform. We have not kept our objective as clearly as we might have done before the people of Queensland and Australia. We do stand for a complete change of the present social system. (Hear, hear!) We believe as Ruskin believed, and because Ruskin loved the beautiful, together with a passion for his economics, peace to his soul! We believe with Ruskin that the poor have no right to the property of the rich, and likewise the rich have no right to the property of the poor. The best of everything that is in this life, we know, is morally the property of the poor, because it is produced by them. We do stand for those who produce in enjoying to the full what they produce. I think nothing is to be gained by going out of our way, and abusing the Prime Minister of Australia or anyone else when we might be explaining those things

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for which we stand. I see nothing unreasonable in the belief that the present Government might go on more quickly on the line of reform than we have gone. I know of no reason why the biggest scheme of reform should not be attempted by the present Government. We have witnessed wonderful changes during the last few years. We have seen institutions shaken and razed to the ground. Changes have come about all over the world that no one ever anticipated. As the only Labour Government in the British Empire, I would like to see this Government attempt bigger schemes of reform than so far they have attempted. Personally, I am not perturbed by the result of the Federal elections. (Hear, hear!) I do not think a defeat at the polls means so much to the Labour movement. Although this may not be the place to say it, I want to say that a mere defeat at the polls is neither here nor there from the point of view of the Labour party. Votes mean very little as compared with the principles for which we stand. Although we suffered a bit of a defeat at the polls at the last Federal elections, I am sure it has had no effect against the great onward march of the Labour movement. I am sure it has had no effect on the intellectual march that is going on. I am optimistic enough to believe that, in spite of everything, we are slowly, very slowly, but surely getting nearer to that time when we shall all be able to live in peace and harmony under our own vine and fig tree.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I did not intend to address the House on the Financial Statement, but owing to the attacks that have been made by the Opposition, and the statements with regard to the farmers generally in Queensland at the present time, I feel it my duty, as a representative of a farming centre, and also of an industrial centre, to say a few words. We heard the members for Dalby, Burnett, Drayton, and Cunningham, and other members representing farming constituencies, speaking of what they will do if they are returned to power again. We need not ask them what they will do. We have only got to take our minds back to what their people did when they were in power for fifty years.

Mr. GRAYSON: They did not impose a land tax.

Mr. BRENNAN: No, they did not impose a land tax. In days gone by, you brought immigrants out from the old country and gave them land orders. Past Governments appointed commissions to look into the affairs of these people. The squatters had large holdings, and some of their land was resumed for selection purposes. The worst of the land was given to the selector for grazing purposes. The land was taken up for the purpose for which it was selected. The land on the Darling Downs was taken up for grazing sheep, as it was stated that the land there would not grow a cabbage. It was taken up for a few shillings an acre up to about £1 an acre in places. When it was found later on that it had another value, and that it was fit for agricultural purposes, who got the benefit? The squatter got the benefit. Let us take the Canning Downs Estate, represented by the hon. member for Cunningham. He knows that estate. He knows that it was taken up at about £1 an acre. He knows that in 1903 or 1904 it was subdivided into farms at from £3 to £5 an acre. There was no Agricultural Bank then, but the farmers got terms from the

vendors, and no sooner had they bought that land than the National Mutual came along and lent them from £5 to £6 an acre on that land. That showed that money was plentiful and the security was good. The Queensland National Bank afterwards lent them as high as £8 to £10 an acre on the land. The result to-day is that the farmers who purchased that land, and were induced to borrow money from the bank, are in stressful circumstances, because the banks get their pound of flesh all the way through. If these farmers had taken up the land under the perpetual lease conditions, they would be better off to-day. If you take any of the farmers between Warwick and Killarney to-day, you will see that most of them are poor, notwithstanding that they got this land, all good land, situated on the Condamine Valley; but the whole system of land selection was wrong as it was carried out by capitalistic influence. They would not give the small man a fair deal. The small man always got the worst of the land, and by the time he was able to pay for it the undertakers were moving him out of his house feet first. The farmers are being told that the Labour Government is no good to them, but under Labour administration they are getting better prices, notwithstanding that we have gone through one of the severest droughts ever experienced in Australia.

Mr. GRAYSON interjected.

Mr. BRENNAN: The farmers carried their own barbed wire and fencing, and cut their corn, which they sold to middlemen, like the hon. member for Cunningham. The hon. member did so well out of the farmers, by giving them a low price for their produce, that he was able to retire. That was the way of the middleman. He was able to retire and come into Parliament, and cry out about the poor, unfortunate farmer.

Mr. GRAYSON: I have been a farmer all my life.

Mr. BRENNAN: You farmed the farmer. I would like to read an extract from the "Daily Mail" of the 25th August, 1919, in reference to the elimination of the middleman. It reads as follows:—

"MIDDLEMEN ELIMINATED.

"AMERICAN FARMERS SAVE.

"While so many experiments in radical socialism are stampeding Europe, the farmers of North Dakota, America's great grain State, are taking the bit in their teeth, too, and are galloping off to pastures of public ownership amid the startled surprise of the rest of the Republic (states J. W. T. Mason, the New York correspondent of 'The Daily Express').

"Four years ago North Dakota demanded that the Legislature build a State-owned terminal grain elevator for the purpose of breaking the grip of the outside distributors and middlemen. The Legislature, in obedience to the old-time political machines, sat still and did nothing. Farmers had always done as they were told in the past; why not now?

"But, somehow, the war fever got into the people of North Dakota. Also, there was a man in the State named Arthur C. Townley. This person, hitherto inconspicuous and unknown, suddenly developed traits of spontaneous leadership. He organised what is known as the

'Non-partisan League.' He rallied the farmers to the league, and Arthur C. Townley and the Non-partisan League are now the dictators of North Dakota.

"TRULY RURAL.

"North Dakota has a total population of about 600,000. The State has no manufacturing industries. It is wholly rural, with scattered villages, none having a population exceeding 20,000."

It shows that in America they have got some better system for the benefit of the farmer than we have got here. When the Denham Government were in power there were complaints by members about the way the farmers were treated by the middlemen, but nothing was done until a Labour Government were returned. The Labour Government established the State Produce Agency, so that the farmers could get any benefit from it if there were any benefits to obtain. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. SIZER: There is no benefit.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why is that? Because some members of the Opposition go down to the Roma street markets and operate against the State Agency. When there is any farmers' produce offered by the State Produce Agency there is no bid, and the following day the farmer has to let it go because he cannot afford to hold it and pay demurrage. We know from the operations at Roma street from week to week that the middlemen have a ring, and they work consistently to prevent the success of the State Produce Agency.

Mr. MOORE: That's nonsense.

Mr. BRENNAN: It is not nonsense. We hear all about what this Government has not done for the farmer. But you must remember that certain Bills have been passed by this Government. For instance, there is the Co-operative Agricultural Production Bill. This is a Bill framed by [8.30 p.m.] this party and was brought about by the conduct of the wheat pool in the Federal Government. We benefited by that knowledge and introduced this Bill to enable farmers to manage and control all their produce for the future. The Opposition raised all the obstacles and objections they possibly could for the purpose of preventing that Bill going through, knowing that the farmers would take out of the hands of the middlemen the administration of their affairs. We have made it possible for the farmers to handle their produce in their own way as a co-operative concern. Then there is the Advances to Farmers and Settlers Bill, by which we have put machinery on the statute-book which will be a great relief to farmers. And yet we hear it repeatedly said on the other side that we have done nothing for the farmers! Now that the drought is broken, I am sure that the Minister will do as he did last year—purchase the seed wheat and distribute it to the farmers, notwithstanding the fact that there is so much money owing by the farmers to this and past Governments for similar assistance in times of disastrous drought. Representations have been made to the Minister, and I am sure that he will extend sympathy in that matter.

We also find the Opposition laying great stress upon the condition of our railways. Recently I had occasion to visit the Southern

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States, and I have no hesitation in saying that the rolling-stock of New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia is in a shocking condition, and is not being attended to. We have not neglected our rolling-stock here. What we have got is in a far better condition than any in Australia, and that should be appreciated by hon. members on the other side. The hon. member for Maranoa referred to machinery which is out of date in the Roma district. In that connection, I am very pleased that the Government has consented to the establishment of a workshop at Toowoomba. The shifting of the engine-shed would entail an expenditure of something like £300,000, and would also entail the erection of a workshop with modern machinery. When it is erected I trust that the Roma and Warwick work will be done in Toowoomba, which is in a good, central position, and it would be more economic than having duplicate machinery, etc.

Mr. FRY: Following that line of argument it would be cheaper to do it in Ipswich.

Mr. BRENNAN: No, because 100 miles would be saved by doing it in Toowoomba, and Ipswich has more than it can do at present.

Mr. GUNN: Why not do it in Charleville?

Mr. BRENNAN: The haulage would be very expensive. I am therefore very pleased that the Government have consented to the erection of works at Willowburn. I am also very pleased to know that we shall soon have the benefit of a State butcher's shop in Toowoomba, which is very necessary. I am not one of those who, during the drought and the awkward position which has arisen through the finances of the Federal Government and the contract made with them during the war, desire to harass our administration of the cattle stations. Knowing the hardships that have existed during the last three years—drought and other troubles—we have performed wonderful things for the people of Queensland—things which prove that Queensland has been under very capable administration. (Hear, hear!) Evidence of that is shown by the recent loan. Yet we find the hon. member for Dalby going to New South Wales and North Queensland decrying the State of Queensland. That is a great pity. If criticism on the Financial Statement is right; we can have it here, but it is a great pity to find him going to New South Wales telling untruths and trying to prevent people from coming to Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: Telling truths. Read the Auditor-General's report.

Mr. BRENNAN: They were told down South that we were starving up here; that we could not get feed. (Opposition interruption.) They were told we have meted out bad treatment to returned soldiers. There was a statement made at Tamworth—

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who by?

Mr. BRENNAN: I am talking about a statement made by returned soldiers. The returned soldiers there were actually put on a holding called Bedford Holding, owned by a very wealthy squatter. He kept the lucerne and tobacco land for himself and put soldiers upon the ridges, where they were almost starving. They were borrowing fat from the hotels in Tamworth because

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they could not afford to buy butter, and this man was even going to prosecute if they fished in the creek at Bedford Holding. I invited the Victorian soldiers to come and inspect our Stanthorpe land to see the conditions under which our soldiers were settled.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

Mr. BRENNAN: I have been at Beerburum, and have seen the pineapples growing there. I have heard the hon. member for Lockyer, and I say that a case of that kind should be investigated. We must sometimes expect to hear complaints like that brought about by one or two bad acts in the administration; but in the main the Government has done more in the interests of the settlement of returned soldiers and people on the land than any Government in Australia, and that has been admitted by hon. members opposite. Yet we find some of them going round abusing the Government. Those are matters which I think are very unfair. Then we hear that this Government is insolvent. In 1914 the deposits in the Savings Bank were £24,224,483; in 1919, £26,824,943. An insolvent estate with people saving up millions!

Mr. SIZER: You know what that means.

Mr. BRENNAN: It means saving—accumulated wealth produced by the action of the Government. When you find a condition like that, it is the answer to deliberate falsehoods told by the Opposition.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You are grasping at a straw.

Mr. BRENNAN: You know you cannot deny it, however we may grasp at a straw. I have been through the North Coast land and seen the progress of the settlement there. As a result of the Government erecting a cannery, land which was worth £3 an acre immediately went up to £12 and £15 an acre.

Then we hear of unemployment, and the hon. member for Dalby reading a good deal about Toowoomba. Unfortunately, we have unemployment there: there are men who are prepared and anxious to work, but they have not approached me on any occasion in delegation looking for work. When individuals have come to me, I have looked after their interests. But while on the Federal campaign, a deputation was led about the streets by a man named Hislop, who was beaten for the plebiscite for the Federal campaign. He said that because he was beaten he had no time to assist the successful candidate, but he organised this unemployment trouble, assisted by the Chamber of Commerce—one of the capitalistic concerns of Queensland—and the hon. member for East Toowoomba, who would take no active part in assisting the unemployed, but who got into his back yard and took out a paling to listen to the report, and promptly sent a wire—

Mr. MOORE: What about Lonsdale?

Mr. BRENNAN: Those were the people who organised and sooled on the affair, to prevent £400,000 being spent in Toowoomba. The city council at Toowoomba could easily have absorbed twenty men, but they would not do it. It was before a Federal election, and they saw the means of making political capital out of it. Whilst I was away last week another deputation of unemployed was walking around the streets again. When I got back I ascertained that Hislop was again fomenting trouble. I have seen the Premier

to-day, who has assured me that if the city council will meet its obligatory share in the construction of a bridge he will consider favourably the Government's share. (Hear, hear!) I think very good consideration has been extended by the Government to the unemployed. We find this man Heslop, who I said was a blackleg and a scab, selling fish to the workers at 9d. and 10d., and when I found it out, I forced the price down to 4½d. He is—

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes. We have them in our midst; we do not deny it—they try to defeat the objects and good intentions of this Government. We know very well where they come from, and we know why they go that way. What about the efforts put in by me in attending this House from day to day and assisting in the welfare of my electorate? And then the hon. member for Dalby comes along and tells the House I have left Toowoomba. That is a very unfair statement.

Mr. VOWLES: I read it out of a report.

Mr. BRENNAN: You read it out of a paper which is a political opponent of mine. If I made all the personal statements about you that we hear, you would not like it. I believe in criticising a man as a politician in this Chamber, but I leave personal statements alone while I am here.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER interjected.

Mr. BRENNAN: It is all true—any man who retires from the farming community who has been dealing in farmers' produce in his business must have retired on the farmer.

Mr. GRAYSON: You are the dirty scavenger of the House.

Mr. BRENNAN: I do not know about being dirty. I say that if any man who retires from the farming community, having been dealing in farmers' produce in his business, must have retired on the farmer. And yet you come along here and talk about the poor, unfortunate farmer! We are spending our millions of money—we have got to borrow—and the profiteer is getting it the whole time. I say it is very unfair for our opponents to be making these statements.

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

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

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): I have been particularly pleased while listening to this debate to learn that we have got such a very mild lot of gentlemen opposite to what we had some three or four years ago. It is particularly pleasing also to know the awful position with regard to the hon. member for Lockyer. A few years ago he came out with a most rabid statement in regard to what the Government were going to do, but now that he is a landowner we find his views have altered to such an extent that he may be termed a mild member, and after the next election takes place he will be a supporter of everything we say in regard to land settlements in the farmers' interests. We also heard the hon. member who has just resumed his seat state that we should leave personal matters out of debate. That is what we all like to see, but it is very regrettable to find that he started his speech with a very unfair insinuation in connection

with the hon. member for Cunningham, and then, because some little trifling matter which had been quoted from some paper hurt his feelings, he immediately rode a higher horse and said, "Do not be personal; leave all these things on one side." It is a true, old saying that people living in glass houses should not throw stones. Right throughout this debate the temper of the House has been particularly good, and the Opposition have taken into consideration the altered conditions with regard to what we have suffered in Queensland during the last twelve months. We know perfectly well that we have had a very dry time. First of all there was a drought, and then we had excessive rains which caused an enormous loss of stock, particulars of which I will give later on. We recognise that the Financial Statement is a matter of the utmost importance; but, unfortunately, we seem to have drifted into what one might call an Address in Reply debate. It must astound those who have any love for their country to learn that we have got into such a state of indebtedness. The debt has been increasing for four or five years, and it is very hard to see where we are going to stop or when it is going to stop if the present Administration keep in power. Loan money has been spent lavishly, and I do not think we are getting the return which we have a right to expect. In the old days it was said by the party in power at the present time that we should only borrow money for reproductive work; but at the present time money is being borrowed to make up deficits, and loan money is spent in such a way as to deserve the censure of all those who have the true interests of Queensland at heart. It is a great pity, indeed, that the money-lenders at home could not come out here and get reports of the exact way in which the money is being spent. Only recently, in my own district, a little bit of railway work was carried out, and it consisted in filling up the approaches to a bridge. The shire council estimated that the work could be done for £200, and offered to do it at that price, but the Government would not accept their offer and went on with the work. It eventually cost a little over £900, and the other day it was washed away, showing that it was not good, substantial work. The same thing applies to many other works to-day, and for the same reason; that is, because the Government and its officers have no control over those who are doing the work.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Didn't you have a flood there the other day?

Mr. WALKER: We did not have a flood. We only had a rise in the river. I notice that the revenue last year was £9,415,543, and the expenditure a little more, leaving a deficit of £171,933. That, added to the other deficit, has made the position look particularly awkward for Queensland, and although the taxation was increased to a great extent we do not seem able to overcome the expenditure. The Treasurer, I believe, honestly tried to make both ends meet, but the unforeseen expenditure was so much that he was a long way out at the end of the year. Even last year we find that the railways and the land were responsible for our biggest losses. Land settlement from an agricultural point of view is nothing like it was in 1914 when we had double the amount of small areas taken up. That was genuine closer

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settlement. Then we find that our railways are being run at a greater loss every year, and wherever you go you see an enormous number of men who do not seem to be playing the game nor doing a fair thing, more particularly in the big centres; and I believe that is responsible for the enormous loss on our railways and the enormous deficits which are recurring every year. These matters want to be gone into by a strong man, or a Commission appointed, and their findings should be followed out in their entirety. This state of affairs has been going on to such an extent that it would create an enormous hardship if a firm foot were put down at once, but it would be in the interests of Queensland if these things were gradually rectified so that we could see that our railway service was carried out in a decent manner. We know the privileges have not been increased in any way, but that fares and freights have gone up to try and overcome the increased expenditure, but to-day we are in exactly the same position that we were in four years ago. We are still running the railways at an enormous loss. When is it going to stop? I notice also that taxation has increased very much, more particularly the land taxation. One thing in the Financial Statement which I do not quite understand is in regard to the land taxation. It states that the land tax received last year amounted to £578,000, and that the Treasurer expects in the coming year to receive £445,000. I take it that the same rate will apply. In fact, I know that the same rate will apply, and how the shortage is accounted for I cannot quite understand. All I know is that during last year, although we had a particularly dry time, the land assessments have gone up something like 300 per cent. This may be news to the House, because I hardly think it has got out yet. I know that in the Mary Valley district the farmers have good land. They have the pick of the land, and the hon. member who has just resumed his seat was not correct when he said that the farmers got the bad land. They have the best of the land there, and the shire valuation, roughly speaking, is £2 an acre, and no land is worth more than that in any district no matter how good it is. If you add the immense amount of labour which the farmer has to put on his farm, and values that labour on union conditions and union pay, I venture to say that an unimproved value hardly exists at all if you take the selling price into consideration. During the last twelve months the Government have had a gentleman going round revaluing the land. I know a place where one man owns 120 acres of land, and he never paid any land tax at all until last year, as he came under the £300 exemption. His land was valued approximately at £2 an acre. The present Government have increased the valuation to £950. That man certainly has the right of appeal, but how can one man fight the Government? First of all he would run all the risks, and secondly he would sooner pay even if he has to borrow the money; and I can assure you that in many cases the only possible income was the amount received from the hides recently sold. In my opinion the land tax for the coming year will greatly exceed the Treasurer's expectations if this revaluing has gone on all over Queensland. It is not fair, and I would like to see the law altered to give the farmer protection; and if the Government say the unimproved value is £7

an acre, as in this case, the farmer should have the right to add his improvements on and compel the Government to take it over. On the other side the Government have the right to take over the land if the farmer's unimproved value is not a fair one. I would also like to refer to the direct taxation, which has increased since 1914-15 to a little over £2,000,000 per annum. That gives one some little idea as to what the people are suffering at the present time. The cry opposite is that the burden is being placed on the shoulders of those best able to bear it; but there are hundreds of farmers along the Mary River—who we call common agricultural farmers—who work ten or twelve hours a day with their wives and families in order to make a living, who come under the present land tax, but when this land tax was initiated by the present Government we were distinctly told that they would not tax the farmer. I would also like to point out that the farmer has gone through a particularly bad time, and that naturally affects the Government, too; and, therefore, all criticism ought to be fair. Look at the time they have had during the last twelve months. We have not got over last year's drought altogether, as the rain came too late to put us on our feet, and the result is that the stock have not come in this year; and, unfortunately, water gave out along the coastal areas and dairying has gone down to such an extent on account of the drought again attacking us, and the cows having to be turned out or the calves killed to save their mothers' lives, that some butter factories have only made as much as a box and a half of butter a day.

Mr. WHITFORD: You can't blame the Government for that.

Mr. WALKER: I am asking for fair treatment for the farmer. I know that hon. members on that side do not know these things, and I want to ease the taxation. That is why I am explaining the horrible position the farmers are in at the present time.

Mr. COLLINS: Quote page 16 of the Treasurer's Statement dealing with the land tax.

Mr. WALKER: The Statement reads as follows:—

“Land Tax.—After allowing for the retrospective tax of last year a slight diminution of this revenue is anticipated, due principally to the subdivision of some of the larger estates. It is proposed to lighten the burden of this tax upon the small farmers by reducing the rates materially on grazing and agricultural lands of an unimproved taxable value not exceeding £750. This will result in a further diminution of revenue to the extent of £5,000 or more.”

I have distinctly pointed out that although that exemption is promised in the Financial Statement the Government are simply increasing the land values, and we have no hope of fighting the Government.

Mr. WHITFORD: Don't your local authorities value the land?

Mr. WALKER: The local authorities put on an unimproved value of £2 an acre, but the Government would not accept that. They override the shire council's valuation, and have put on a man who has been in the city all his life, and the only land that man

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ever owned was when he speculated, as a public servant, in a miner's homestead near Gympie. Now we have this man going round valuing our land, and we have no hope of redress at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How did he get on with the miner's homestead? Pretty well, didn't he?

Mr. WALKER: I think he did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then he must have some knowledge of land.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. member for Gympie knows this gentleman as well as I do, and he knows perfectly well that he took up a miner's homestead on the other side of the Mary River, land which was practically unknown to the ordinary man, but he had inside information and he sold out at the first opportunity, and the result is that we have to suffer at the present time. We want some redress. If we can get redress in the form of reduced taxation by a Commission, I am prepared to accept the report of the Works Commission on unimproved values in the country, because I know we would get a square deal, as most of the members are practical men. I was referring to the losses of the drought. It is rather

[9 p.m.] astounding to know what people have gone through. Later on, I propose to give a few tables recently compiled to give some idea of our losses in that district. I take it that they apply all over Queensland, but the notice has been too short to get a complete return. Before speaking on that, I would like to refer to the loan expenditure which has been going on for some considerable time. I understand that something like £4,000,000 of loan money will have to be spent this year, the chief object being to keep the unemployed problem away from the eyes of the Government. We know that in times of stress we should increase our loan policy, but we can overdo it, and the present Government have been responsible to a great extent for reducing production and keeping capital away out of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS dissented.

Mr. WALKER: Take the production returns, take the railway returns. The Commissioner distinctly emphasised the point that production has gone down, and it has been responsible for a certain amount of loss on the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What has been the cause of the diminution in production?

Mr. WALKER: There is no encouragement for a man to put his money in anywhere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't you know we have had five years of drought?

Mr. WALKER: Everything I am quoting to-night is from the hon. gentleman's own officers, so I cannot be wrong. I say that as far as the loan money is concerned we want to be careful with regard to expenditure, as we can only borrow a certain amount for reproductive works. In other words, you have to take population and land settlement into all your schemes, otherwise it is going to be a greater drag on Queensland, and a heavier burden on posterity. These things ought to be gone into soundly; it is no use rushing into them. If hon. gentlemen want to economise, they should knock off all those motor-cars which are running around joy riding, get rid of a lot of these railway men who seem to be falling over one another, do

away with a lot of these expensive trips to the old country of which we have had too many. We had the Minister for Railways' expensive trip (running into about £1,800) to the old country. I am only speaking of his own personal expenses, I am not talking of those who were with him. Shortly afterwards he was talking about entering Federal politics. That is not playing the game. If we are going to send men away to learn a trade, they have a right to stop in the service for a number of years. Then, we have the Premier going on another expensive trip. We had Mr. Ryan going on two trips, one of which, I believe, was paid for by the people who engaged him.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The trips of the Premier have been very profitable to Queensland.

Mr. WALKER: We have sent Mr. Hunter home. What have we sent him home for if he cannot arrange loans for Queensland? Surely he has as much intelligence as the next man! I think he is an able man, especially as far as finance is concerned. Would it not be far better to see all this money which is spent on guzzles saved? I did not attend them, as I did not consider the condition of the country warranted their being held.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you had attended them you would easily have known they were not guzzles.

Mr. WALKER: All these are small items, but if you add them up they become a big matter. It is far better to economise in the true sense of the word. It would be far better to give some men work on reproductive work, if it is at all possible to get it in the district. I would also like to point out that the interest on the public debt is £2,692,000 per annum. Is that not an enormous sum of money for us to pay annually for money of which we have had good use up to the present time? We find that this loan madness is going on to such an extent that it is hard to say what posterity will have to compete with in the next twenty or thirty years.

Mr. WHITFORD: On principle, why did you receive the extra £200?

Mr. WALKER: I did not believe in the £200 being passed.

Mr. WHITFORD: You accepted it, though!

Mr. WALKER: Of course, I did, because I recognise I am doing twice the work the hon. member is doing. (Laughter.) I was speaking with regard to the losses of dairy stock. During the last four or five months I have been down on the coast with my own cattle trying to co-operate with others with regard to getting water and the dipping and saving of stock. We have had no end of trouble there, and in many cases it has been the man who could fight the most, who knew the most bushcraft, who got on the best. But other people got on fairly well by attending to their cattle and seeing them regularly watered. It is truly astounding to see the number of stock which have died there. Of course, a lot has been the fault of the men not looking after their cattle, but, generally speaking, it was the effect of the drought. I have had a table prepared on account of the heavy rain which fell on the 6th of this month, knowing the effect it would have on poor cattle of fifty-one suppliers in the Cooroy district, which is known

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to most people. They lost 839 head of milking stock, and 315 died in one night. That gives some idea of the loss of cattle over the whole of that great North Coast line between Brisbane and Maryborough. Take the Malony district, in respect of which it was reported in a Brisbane paper that 300 had died in one night. Perfectly true; but we find, through having received a little information from the local factory, that the total number was 871 deaths. That gives some idea of what dairymen have to contend with. If you strike an average, roughly speaking, at £12 or £15 per head, you will clearly see it is going to take many years before these men are going to overcome their present financial troubles. Probably they will never do it in their lives and get up to the standard of breeding they have bred to for many years past. That gives some idea of the conditions prevailing in the country. One very large factory made only a box and a-half of butter a day, distinctly showing they have had a particularly heavy time. In addition to that, we have had to buy an enormous amount of fodder at a most expensive price. I would like to say that right through the whole of our troubles the Government have not come forward to help us in any way at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What nonsense. We allowed you to run your stock free on Crown land all along the North Coast.

Mr. WALKER: I paid £5 agistment, and I have been down with my men for the last three or four months. Yet the hon. gentleman says I have been there free. That applies to the whole of us. It has been most expensive to all of us. We have to live with our cattle under rotten conditions—mosquitoes, sandflies, and all that sort of thing out in the country. The night we had 11 inches of rain any amount of men were right along the Noosa district between Double Island Point and the Maroochy River sleeping with their cattle.

Mr. WHITFORD: Do you expect the Government to do away with mosquitoes? (Laughter.)

Mr. WALKER: What I really do expect is that the Government should get in touch with those who have fodder, to give us first-class information, and help us on a large scale, because we as a co-operative institution could not charter ships. The Downs Company did it with regard to their pig supply, but they had to co-operate with private enterprise to fill up a ship. We could not do it, although we attempted to do it. The farmers in our district turned us down because the venture was too big, and the loss would settle the whole factory.

Mr. COLLINS: Did you approach the Government?

Mr. WALKER: We approached the Government at the last moment. But the Government should have come forward and tried to organise the thing. They have their experts all over the place. They leave the whole of it to the farmers. That has been our trouble; we have had no help. I will say that the Acting Premier (Mr. Fihelly) did send a wire during the Federal elections for a boat, but it could not be arranged at that particular time. Since then, through the Government, we had a consignment

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loaded last week of 90 tons for my own factory, and I think 400 or 500 tons for the whole of the factories in Queensland. But owing to the shipping strike it will not arrive here until Friday or Saturday.

Mr. COLLINS: We are not responsible for the shipping strike.

Mr. WALKER: The very doctrines hon. members have been preaching here for the last five years have been responsible for all our strikes, in my opinion. If they would only deal with these matters with a firm hand, and when they get on the tin box tell every man who is a staunch unionist, and believes in arbitration, to stick to his guns and be a man of his word, we would have less strikes.

Mr. WHITFORD: Why don't the Federal Government settle the strikes? They have the power.

Mr. WALKER: These are all State affairs. Hon. gentlemen who have always talked arbitration in this House have always supported the strikers, who would never adhere to the decision of a judge appointed by themselves. I was talking about lucerne chaff which costs £26 a ton. At the present time we are faced with a heavy loss, and it may be months before we get over it. We will have to do as the Government did with regard to their State Produce Agency—speculate a little. In addition to that, we have had increased fares and freights. We have had also an increased amount for a dingo tax imposed on us during the past year, and a heavier shire taxation to meet the expenditure on rough roads, etc. The Government have not helped us at all up to the present time.

I would also like to refer to the question of soldiers' settlement, which was brought up here to-night, and to speak with regard to the delay with applications. I remember a motion moved by the hon. member for Burnett when we had an adjournment of the House one afternoon. It seems to have done no good at all, because I have now three applications, some of which have been going on for some considerable time. I went into the bank the other day, and they said they would send the mortgage up to-morrow. That could have been sent weeks before. They sent it after I called in to investigate. If the bank is understaffed, transfer some of the men out of the Railway Department, and see that the work is done in the way it has a right to be done. I believe the inspectors have been heavily worked, and in the Gympie district they have done wonderful work, when you take into consideration the roughness of the country. I would also like to refer to the building of Anzac cottages. I understand that the Government will not allow an Anzac cottage to be built on a miner's homestead at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't confuse things. The Government have nothing to do with Anzac cottages. I am the chairman of the Anzac Cottage Committee, and it has nothing to do with the Government at all.

Mr. WALKER: All I can say is that the committee will not allow an Anzac cottage to be built on a miner's homestead.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not true.

Mr. WALKER: All I can say is, I interviewed the hon. gentleman in conjunction with the hon. member for Gympie, and up to the present time I have received no reply.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: All I want is a transfer of the land so that I can hand it over to the Public Curator.

Mr. WALKER: The hon. gentleman has neglected his duty as a Minister in not giving an ordinary member the common courtesy of a reply. So he can see that my ignorance was due to his own carelessness. I have been waiting for this reply for three months. There is a lady at Gympie waiting for this cottage, and up to the present time she is in the same position as myself—ignorant of the law. If the Minister is prepared to say that if the land is transferred to him and handed over to the Public Curator the matter will be fixed up, that gets over the whole difficulty. That is all I want. I would like also to speak with regard to the question of distribution. Up to the present the Government have never grappled with that big question, the distribution of everything we consume. It applies to the whole of Australia. It goes back ever since Australia was Australia. We have never improved on the present method. We seem to be cross-firing all the time. The question of distribution would cheapen the cost of living by 20 per cent. Take the State butchers' shops. We are running them on fairly economic lines. The shops get the beef for 3½d., and the distribution costs 100 per cent., distinctly showing that there is something wrong with our distribution of foodstuffs. The same thing applies to everything we use in Australia. I would like to see the Government grapple with that question. I think we should be loyal to all our own products. Everyone should make up their minds that they will not use any article of food or clothing unless it is produced in Australia. Strange to say, we seem to distrust our own stuff, and always go in for imported stuff. We should have more lofty ideals, and say that rather than use anything made in another country we would sooner do without it. More particularly we should stick to everything made in Australia.

Mr. COLLINS: You like imported Governors.

Mr. WALKER: I would like the present Government to try and bring about a better understanding between the employers and employees. At present, they are grappling at one another's throats, and they hardly take any notice of each other in the street. At present, the employees look on every high official as an employer, and things are not what they should be. We should try to get back to that beautiful period which existed a few years ago.

Mr. WHITFORD: Their interests are identical.

Mr. WALKER: We want to get back to the period that existed a few years ago with the same feelings between employers and employees, and that will help us in all our troubles. That is the only way to help to develop this great State, and put it on a better footing, so that we can compete with any other country. It is terrible to see the ill-feeling that exists between the employers and employees. Take any political meeting, and you will see the ill-feeling that exists there. One side is just as bad as another. That should not be, as it has a

tendency to bring down Australia and degrade the whole of us. Many promises were made by the present Government, but they have not played the game. Take the land question, for instance: the number of agricultural farms taken up under the perpetual lease system is not half what it was four or five years ago. Land is dearer to-day than ever it was. Although we have just gone through a severe drought, good land is scarcer to-day than ever it was. If you work out the perpetual lease system, you will find that it is not cheap land at all.

Mr. WHITFORD: You practically get it for nothing.

Mr. WALKER: I remember when the perpetual lease system was tried by the Liberal Government for the first time. There were several blocks of land thrown open, and applicants were given the option of freehold or perpetual lease. There were about seventy-five applicants, including men who support the Labour party and others. The perpetual lease price was based on the capital value of the land at 3½ per cent. When the applications were opened we found that all the Labour men went for a freehold title. (Opposition laughter.) Not one of them went for a perpetual lease. You will never get any solid settlement unless you give a man a title to his land. He is not going to work night and day for the Crown or anyone else. Perpetual lease is subject to reappraisal of rent, and it is just like a freehold title with the heavy land tax that they are inflicting on us at the present time. The Government's land policy looks as if they want to break up all the homes and drive the men off the land. I ask the Government to allow their Works Commission to go into the land valuation question, and I am sure they will bring in a report which will agree with the sentiments I am uttering to-night.

Mr. WHITFORD: You might be sincere, but your party is not.

Mr. WALKER: I think 90 per cent. of the members of this House are sincere in what they say. We have not got the good roads, or cheap food, or cheap farming implements which the Government promised us. We have not got the water conservation which they promised. All these promises were made by the Labour party, but as a result of Labour Government for five years, we have got high wages, dear living, and record unemployment. I have spoken about Gympie, where we have got hard-working men. We have never had an industrial dispute in Gympie, which shows the class of men employed there. The policy of the present Government is purely a single man's policy. The single men are better off, because they have got no responsibility. During the last election we heard a lot of cries about the profiteering. We have heard it every time since the present Government have come into power. The hon. member for Toowoomba to-night was talking about the middlemen, and he spoke about the State Produce Agency, but he never had the courtesy to mention the Co-operative Distributing Agency which has been in existence for some time, and which is worked by farmers in the interests of farmers, and eliminates the middlemen altogether. We have a State Produce Agency initiated by the present Government, and they make 100 per cent. profit on some of the articles they

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purchase. Their consignments last year totalled £37,411, and they purchased about double that quantity.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: On what articles did they make a profit of 100 per cent.?

Mr. WALKER: If I told you it would mean the discharge of some of your employees. The hon. gentleman can go along to the manager of the State Produce Agency, and he will find that they make 100 per cent. on some of the articles they purchase. Last year the State Produce Agency purchased £69,066 worth of stuff which they resold. In the State butchery they make 100 per cent. profit on the meat. They buy it at 3½d. and sell it at 6½d. The State butchery has no bad debts, and no delivery to make, as everyone comes to the shop. There are no horses to keep, and it is run most economically. These things demand an inquiry. If the grocers in Brisbane made 100 per cent. profit they would be called profiteers, but nobody thinks of calling the Government a profiteer. The greatest profiteer we have got to-day is the present Government.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who gets the profits?

Mr. WALKER: In one sense, the profits will go to make up the balance-sheet. The greatest profiteers we have got to-day are the men who do not play the game, the men who advocate go-slow strikes. They are the men who take more than their fair share of profit. We know that the cost of living has gone up 70 per cent. in Queensland since the present Government came into power. Although members opposite talk about their freedom, they must recognise that members of the Opposition have just as much freedom as anyone else. I hope the Government will study economy. We want land settlement to go on at a greater pace, we want production to be increased, and we want private enterprise to be given a better show, and not to be restricted by taxation or repudiation. We will then find that things will go on much better in Queensland. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): I want to say a few words on the Financial Statement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Take it as read.

Mr. MOORE: No, there are one or two things in it that we cannot take as read. When I saw this Financial Statement first I was not surprised that it was held over so long. It is full of excuses and half-truths. It is most unfair for the Treasurer to make these half-truths in a Statement like this, and I am going to point out some of them. We find the Treasurer going through the country making all sorts of promises. He makes the amiable profession of Dr. Jekyll in that respect, but when he comes into this House he pursues the taxpayer with the relentless ferocity of Mr. Hyde. He has a dual personality. In the country he professes one thing, and he comes here and does something entirely different. In the Statement the Treasurer talks about the success of the loan which was recently floated. He says here—

“The issue cannot be considered as anything but very satisfactory, and is a fitting reply to those who were continually decrying the financial management of the

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State and predicting disaster to its credit whenever the Government approached the London market.”

What was the reason they were able to float a loan in the way they did? Merely because the Upper House did its duty in refusing to pass the repudiatory legislation. Do not we know that the Treasurer some time ago issued diatribes against the colonial financiers in London, because they were endeavouring to destroy the credit of the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are those the gentlemen who advanced the money for the last loan?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, they are the gentlemen. Why did they advance the money? Simply because the Upper House protected the Government, and refused to allow them to pass repudiatory measures. The Upper House refused to pass the Bill to increase the pastoral rents, and to take over the tramways and reduce the fares. These are the things the Legislative Council did, and the Government are reaping the benefit to-day.

Mr. COLLINS: They must have read some of your speeches.

Mr. MOORE: My speeches do not matter at all. It is the actions of the Government that matter in the eyes of the London financiers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are sorry we had such a favourable loan.

Mr. MOORE: I do not call it favourable. You are paying 6½ per cent., and you allowed it to go free of income tax and succession duty. Do you call that favourable? I do not call it favourable. You are borrowing at 6½ per cent. to spend in building railways that will return only 13s. 9d. per cent. When you build the Many Peaks Railway then, under the most favourable circumstances, it will not pay ½ per cent. as evidenced by your own railway experts.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What does the Cooyar Railway pay?

Mr. MOORE: No railways are paying under the present Administration. They cannot be expected to pay. Mr. Hunter said the other day that 3,000 men were put on unproductive work in the Railway Department: and that is the sort of thing that is going to be continued. The Government call it a successful loan. Any country could get a successful loan on such liberal terms as that. The future has got to pay for it. The people know who will have to pay for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was a successful loan.

Mr. MOORE: It may suit the Minister to say it was a successful loan, but if he knew his right mind we would know that he considered it was not successful. The way things are going on in the Railway Department will smash up the Government, because they have not the backbone to stand up against the system. There is one half-truth in the Statement that I would like to refer to. It says—

“The deficiency in the revenue from pastoral holdings was attributable to the action of the Legislative Council in rejecting legislation which would have given the additional amount. The shortage in railway receipts was due to the dislocation of shipping, the closing down of the Cloncurry mines, and the outbreak of pneumonic influenza which, for a while, practically paralysed interstate traffic.”

Mr. MOORE: It does not say anything about the Townsville railway strike—that the Government were £151,000 short in their estimate for the Townsville railway [9.30 p.m.] owing to the strike, that they were not game to stand up for their own law, that the Home Secretary told the men that their duty was to their union and not to the Government.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Why didn't you do that when you were there.

Mr. MOORE: If a man is in the Cabinet, he should give sound and proper advice to men. Those in responsible positions should uphold their own laws.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If you were there, what would you do?

Mr. MOORE: If I were there, I would make the man that was boss on the railway be the boss. If I put a man off for not doing his duty, he would stop off and would not be put on again through political influence.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: That is not true.

Mr. MOORE: It is a well-known fact that political influence is rampant. A man is put off to-day and comes back with a note from a Minister or some other member of Parliament, and is put on again. While every inspector has responsibility, he has no power, and consequently he gives up all efforts to remedy the state of affairs. We all know it is true, and because it might mean losing a few votes the Administration are not game to stand up and say, "If we give you a responsible position, we also give you the power to carry it through and the necessary backing."

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You would carry a big stick about with you.

Mr. MOORE: I would not carry a big stick at all. If you give a man responsibility, back him up in his endeavour to do the work and act fairly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Of course, the boss is always right—the men are always wrong.

Mr. MOORE: They have power to go to the Appeal Board. What is the good of having an Appeal Board if political influence decides it?

At twenty-five minutes to 10 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Then we come to the question of the revenue that is to be derived from the pastoral rents being raised—this repudiatory legislation that the Government anticipated bringing in. They expected to receive £258,000 by getting that legislation through. They did not get it through; but, without that they received £284,269 more in taxation. And still they used up the whole of the money got from the super land and income tax put on for a special purpose, and still had a deficit of £171,000. If any other body in Australia were to do that there would be a howl throughout the whole of Queensland and Australia about the misappropriation of funds. They would not be allowed to do it, and yet the Government is quite calm about it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Could we foresee the influenza epidemic?

Mr. MOORE: It ran into £61,000. They collected £284,000 land tax without the extra money expected from the raising of rent. There are a few things you could not foresee;

but look at the increase in revenue that you could not foresee, and that would more than cover the unforeseen expenditure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the loss through drought.

Mr. MOORE: We will come to that directly.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Your argument is that everybody lost through the drought but the Government.

Mr. MOORE: They have not lost yet; but they are going to lose through it this year. What they lost was due to disorganisation in the North, industrial troubles which they were not game to stand up to. The member for Bowen talked about Mr. Hughes the other night, and he said he was not fit to run a lavatory, and why didn't he settle the strike by giving in. He believes in that principle, and yet he believes in arbitration. If we have arbitration, why should any Premier have to give in? Did the Queensland Government settle the strike in twenty-four hours? No! They made a bigger mess of it by not upholding their own laws than any other Government in Australia.

Just one other thing I want to call attention to. It is on page 4 and refers to outdoor relief. It says that £17,000 was spent in outdoor relief last year. This year I notice they put in an estimate of £41,000 for outdoor relief. After five years' record revenue they have £41,000 for outdoor relief. I say it is an admission of absolute failure—with the biggest revenue ever heard of in the history of Queensland and the highest taxation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is an admission that we have a humane Government.

Mr. MOORE: It is an admission that the administration is absolutely rotten. Under the head "Agriculture and Stock" there was £3,000 spread over various votes. There is nothing put down for increased expenditure in the Agriculture and Stock vote. They do not seem to realise that the Government have taken away the assets—the credit from the people on the land—the small farmers, and that nearly all the stock has died off these places. I would like them to get some conception of what it has meant during the past few months, especially on the Downs, to see a man's whole life's work practically going day after day in the loss of his cattle. He knows that when they are gone he has no earthly hope of borrowing from the bank, because his credit has been taken away by the Government. And doesn't it strike you that it is absolutely necessary that some assistance has to be given to them to allow them to start again! Yet we find £41,000 put down for outdoor relief in the cities, and not one pound for assistance to the farmer out in the country. And then the Government goes calmly round at election time and says, "Look what we have done for the farmer." I would like to quote a letter to show exactly what they are doing for the farmer. I dare say you will remember some time back a deputation waited on the Minister for Railways asking for a reduction in freight so that fodder could be got up for starving stock. The concession was a very splendid one in that they gave a reduction of 50 per cent, which has to be paid back in two years by the farmer who gets it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Do you want a free service?

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Mr. MOORE: I want the same relief given to the farmer in the country as is given to the man in the city.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He is getting it, too.

Mr. MOORE: No, he does not. I wish to read this letter, Mr. Chairman. It shows the valuable assistance that is being given to settlers by the railway administration. It is as follows:—

“Kingsthorpe,
17th December, 1919.

“A. E. Moore, Esq., M.L.A.,
Jondaryan.

“Dear Sir,—I have been requested to write pointing out the treatment received in connection with the alleged concession of freight for fodder to feed starving stock.

“A consignment of 8 tons of chaff was forwarded from Nobby about the 6th ultimo, 4 tons for Kingsthorpe, and 4 tons for Oakey. On applying for the concession I received the information that as my lot did not fill the truck I had no claim, and that the concession only amounted to half freight down, the balance within two-three years. The truck was full on arrival at Kingsthorpe, and my lot (4 tons) if forwarded separately, would have filled an “F” wagon.

“One wonders if the supposed concession is genuine, and as the Labour party may try to show how considerate they are in the matter of concessions to the small farmer, this information may be useful to you.

“Thanking you for past favours,
Yours faithfully,

“H. BRIMBLECOMBE, Sec., Q.F.U.”

Is not it a most extraordinary commentary on the sympathy and assistance given to farmers by the Government? Every opportunity is given to one section of the community, and the other section can be downtrodden as much as they like.

I see in the Public Works Department £15,000 set down for “unforeseen expenditure,” the whole amount being practically accounted for by the increased expenditure on buildings. I would like to know how that comes about? I have an idea it was through the rotten administration of the Public Works Department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was through the request of you “chaps” for increased buildings.

Mr. MOORE: I would like to give you one instance of how this works. A school was built at Jondaryan. Started in November the year before last, it was to be finished in January, so that a start could be made when the school year opened. There was an average of ten men working on that for ten and a-half months. I asked what the estimated cost and the actual cost were, and learnt that the estimated cost was £1,480 and the actual cost £1,482; and yet the estimated time was only six weeks in one case, and it took ten months! I was rather interested to find out where the rest of this money went to. On looking up the Public Works report I found £366 put down for the erection of a fence round the school—a small 4-acre piece of ground, so as to try and endeavour to minimise the rotten calculations and the way

the public works are carried out. And we find Government works going on in that way—men playing cards instead of doing their work. The foreman sacked them, and the carpenters declared the school “black” until the men were taken back, and the whole work became the laughing-stock of the place. That is only one case that we know of.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Can't you get another one?

Mr. MOORE: How many more are there that we do not know of? Go to any department in Brisbane, and ask them whether they want the work carried out by day labour or contract. We all know what the reply will be.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: What did your ex-Minister, Mr. Paget, say? You lost £2,000,000 as a result of contract.

Mr. MOORE: Day labour is carried out efficiently in shire councils, where the man who is put in charge is boss.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: The Public Works buildings stand at the time of cyclone.

Mr. MOORE: The cyclone did not make this school take ten months to build instead of six weeks. The Public Works Department in that case was a public scandal, and I would like a Commission to be put on to all these works to see whether the other works are carried out in the same manner.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: He saved several thousand pounds.

Mr. MOORE: A bald statement like that carries no weight at all. The experience we have in the country in regard to works carried out by day labour shows that the policy is absolutely wrong. In another instance the committee of a school had to pull down 10 chains of fencing and re-erect it. They called for tenders, and £6 was the price put in. That price was given by a strong Labour supporter, too, but the Education Department said they could not have it done by contract, and they sent out two men all the way from Toowoomba to do it, and it cost £36 to carry out that work.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: They made a decent job of it. A £6 job would be blown away in the first storm.

Mr. MOORE: They only had to pull down 10 chains of fencing and re-erect it. The Government ought to be very proud of their administration. Then the Treasurer says—

“The dry weather conditions prevailing during the latter part of the financial year resulted in a scarcity of employment.”

I would like to state that the dry weather did not create a scarcity of employment at all. As a matter of fact, it made employment, because a large number of men had to be put on to cut down scrub to feed starving stock. That applies to all the pastoral areas in Queensland, and also to many farming districts where the stock had to be fed. Then, with regard to the action of the Government in purchasing chaff. About six weeks ago we were told that the Government were going to step in, and they stated in the papers before the elections came on what Mr. Fihelly, who was Acting Premier at the time, was going to do to assist the farmers. A notice was sent out that if the Farmers' Union on the Downs would guarantee all

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the money required to purchase the chaff, guarantee the distribution of it, and send down the money when the chaff arrived, the Government would kindly consent to bring it up. Afterwards, when they found there was such a rush for it, they did not ask for a guarantee for the whole of it. They said, if we sent down £13 10s. a ton with the order they would deliver the chaff when it came to hand. It has not come yet, and I know my money went in over a month ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: Who is to blame for that? The Federal Government, for not stopping the strike.

Mr. MOORE: Not the Federal Government, but because of the engineers' strike. I would like to know what is going to happen to this chaff. Are we going to be forced to take the chaff at the price sent in when we do not want the chaff?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: If you do not want the chaff you will get a refund.

Mr. MOORE: We will get a refund. That is what I want to know. Then, in regard to the public works policy, the Treasurer says—

"In ordinary times a very active public works policy is warranted in this State in order to provide land for settlement, water conservation, irrigation schemes, harbour development, and road construction."

And he said a large amount of loan money will be required in each year to finance sound and promising schemes. Last year, what sound and promising schemes were financed? And yet we find they spent over £2,700,000 in loan money. That expenditure has only been exceeded twice in ten years. Instead of spending money on sound and promising schemes, we find 3,000 men put on the railways on unproductive work, when we have rivers like the Burnett and Condamine crying out for water schemes. Although we have these magnificent watercourses awaiting exploitation, and although we have seen the success obtained in Victoria and South Australia through irrigation, we find the money available has been spent on unproductive work in connection with railways, £10,000 spent to buy votes for a candidate at Roma. What an extraordinary thing? And then they cut down the hills at the wrong end. They left the biggest hill of the whole lot between Chinchilla and Roma not cut down, and they put men on at the Roma end so that they could have their votes at the by-election, and then the men refused to vote because they did not get a holiday and the Government had no special train for them. (Opposition laughter.) I can imagine how pleased the Administration must be at the way things are going on. I quite understand they try to put a bold face on things, and I quite see they do not want other people to know, but they must know that their days are numbered and that the Administration is doomed. This question of irrigation is a most important one. Personally, when looking at the Burnett River, I was surprised at the extent of irrigable land on its banks and the enormous quantity of water that could be impounded by a weir. The fall is only about 1 foot per mile, and the banks are very deep—over 70 feet. Would it not have been better to spend money in conserving water on the Burnett than to spend a million pounds in buying cattle stations?

Mr. DUNSTAN: It would have been better if it was done ten years ago.

Mr. MOORE: Suppose it was done to-day, would it not be of advantage in years to come? If the Government had entered into that proposition four years ago, instead of spending a million pounds in buying cattle stations, would it not have been a good thing for Queensland to-day? The Treasurer says—

"There is abundant evidence that Queensland has ample means and opportunities for water conservation and irrigation, and several promising schemes for such enterprise are under consideration."

Mr. ARMFIELD: You did not know that until it was pointed out.

Mr. MOORE: We did know it.

Mr. O'SULLIVAN: Why didn't you do something when you were in power?

Mr. MOORE: We did not spend money in fish shops, State stations, etc.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. member to address the Chair.

Mr. MOORE: Now, I would like to quote what the Minister for Railways said in 1914. As reported on page 1531 of "Hansard" of that year, he said—

"I find the actual amount received by the people of Queensland totalled £10,912,514. In interest we have already paid £16,529,224, and we still owe £11,728,800. These figures must really interest the young Queenslanders. We do not permit a local authority to go along in that haphazard way: we make them provide interest and redemption. I have a little table prepared, which I will read in order to get it into 'Hansard.'"

I am very pleased it is here, because it illustrates exactly what the Government are doing. He further said—

"The methods followed here are bad. There is something wrong about them—something impossible about them. It does not seem good finance. It is the sort of finance that the hon. member for Murrumba stands for. He is associated in that sort of finance with the member for Drayton, the deputy leader of the farmers' party."

Mr. PAYNE: That is right.

Mr. MOORE: What have they done? They floated a loan at 6½ per cent. free of income tax and free of succession and probate duty. They have purchased State stations, on which they do not pay any taxes and on which the State loses about £3,000 a year though dispossessing the private owners, who did pay taxes. They started stores on day labour works and they lose £1,200 a year on them, and then the naive admission is that they sold the stores too cheaply. Fancy putting up stores to sell food to day labourers, and not being able to square the accounts.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your complaint is that we bought meat too cheaply.

Mr. MOORE: I do not say you buy it at all. If anyone could go to the manager of the meatworks and put a pistol to his head he could get meat cheaply. You took the farmers' butter in the same way. I do not call that buying; I call it commandeering. Those things may be all right from the point of view of the Government, but they are not helping Queensland. They are

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not getting us out of the financial morass that the Secretary for Railways said he was going to do when he made that speech in 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You will find that most instructive.

Mr. MOORE: I have found it most instructive. I also think it would be most instructive if one of the railway managers of the United States could come to Queensland to see exactly how things are done in Queensland. He could find out—(1) How to employ more men and cut down the public train service to a minimum. (2) How never to be up to time either starting or stopping. (3) How hardly ever to do anything other than inconvenience the people who own the railways. (4) How to extend fares and freights in inverse ratio to the value given in the country only. (5) How to convert a self-contained and paying service into a hopeless state of bankruptcy in four years. (6) How to carry off this situation in a light and airy manner by stating that it doesn't matter if they don't pay; we'll get it from a land tax. They might do that and I do not suppose it would cost £1,800 to come here and find it out. Then we

[10 p.m.] find that the super tax is to be kept on this year. The super tax was put on for a specific purpose, and it was only going to be kept on for one year. That tax was collected and the money used for ordinary expenditure and we find it is to be kept on.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: It was subject to renewal.

Mr. MOORE: The Treasurer never said a word about keeping it on. It was one of those cases where he told a half-truth. The Treasurer says further—

“It must be remembered that last year's revenue included retrospective income and land tax; but, even making allowance for that, the revenue of the State is seen to be almost stationary.”

I think it is only the stagnation which has been caused through the Labour Government's administration, through the shaking of the public confidence. By reason of the want of confidence throughout the country the people are afraid to put their money into any enterprises.

Mr. COLLINS: They are building all over the place in my electorate. You must represent a very poor part of Queensland.

Mr. MOORE: I represent a part which, before the Labour Administration came into Queensland, was called the garden of Queensland, which was one of the richest parts of Australia. To-day it is practically a desert. Through the land taxation values on the Downs have been brought down 50 per cent.; the credit of the farmers has been taken away; their assets have gone.

Mr. COLLINS: Does the land tax stop the crops growing?

Mr. MOORE: No, but it took away the opportunity of the farmer to recover himself, because it took away the value of his property and his opportunity to finance himself.

Mr. COLLINS: How much do the farmers really pay?

Mr. MOORE: I am not talking about what they have paid. It is in the reduction in the value of their holdings where the trouble comes about. Their security is gone. They put the whole of their labour into their

farms, thinking they had an asset on which they could draw in times of adversity; but the Labour Government comes into power, and with the stroke of a pen takes away half the asset. Those who suffer understand the hardships. Those who sit on the front Treasury benches perhaps do not understand. Later on, probably, they will understand, when they get put out in the cold. They will then have an opportunity of seeing what the sufferings of the people have been. The Statement also has this to say—

“It is well known that the majority of the pastoral lessees in this State do not pay to the Crown a fair rent for the land they occupy. Information in the possession of the Lands Department shows that, taking the whole State, the average rental paid on pastoral holdings is 18s. 11½d. per square mile.”

The average rent paid by the Crown for its State stations is 7s. 2d. per square mile. Even then they cannot make a profit if they pay their taxes the same as the ordinary individual. Yet they say they are making a success of State enterprises. They think it is worth while spending £1,000,000 and giving 4½ per cent. debentures for these places. The Government look at a thing from a totally different point of view to the people outside. The man outside on a farm looks at it from the top of a mountain of taxation; the Treasurer looks through a window of the Star Chamber at the Trades Hall, and says he is satisfied. I know there are country members who must realise the hardships that many people are undergoing to-day. It is up to them to endeavour to instruct their colleagues on the front bench regarding the difficulties with which the people have to put up, and see if they cannot remedy them. There are one or two things which I want to mention, because they are particularly brought forward in the Commissioner's report. We are going to have retrospective taxation to go back six months. As a rule, the pastoralist or the farmer has to pay for a thing he has not got. He pays for stock on hand at the end of the year. We have not had an opportunity of proving up to the present that very often that stock is dead, and he has to pay on something he never had. This time we have to pay on that stock on hand at 30th June. In very many cases 80 per cent. of that stock is dead, consequently we have to pay on income we have never had and have no possible hope of getting. The Commissioner drew attention to this four years ago. He said—

“The operations of this Act have resulted in some persons who sold heavily in anticipation of the drought having to pay considerable sums by way of income tax although they had actually lost stock by drought. Some owners who had paid small amounts by way of tax since 1907 found themselves obliged to make large payments on selling out during 1915. The system of taxation under the Act of 1902 appears to divide the profits more equitably from year to year.”

When the Commissioner of Taxation makes a statement like that, and shows the unfairness of it towards a section of the people, you would think the Treasurer would take some notice, and endeavour to remedy it. He also goes on to say last year—

“The noticeable changes are farmers who paid 10.39 per cent. of the tax for 1917, but for 1918 were only assessed on 4.99 per cent. of the total tax.”

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They have gone down under the Labour Administration, which was said to be so sympathetic to the farmers, from 10 per cent. to 4 per cent. This year they probably have gone down more. And we find the man who was sent out to the Downs to do the valuing was sacked at the end of November because he did not put the values up higher. They had the opportunity of testing whether his values were right or not. He got instructions to value higher, and because he dared, in his experience, to say they were fair and equitable, he got put out. No one else has been sent up since, but I suppose some temperamentally fit valuer will be sent up there to put them up to what the Treasurer thinks is required for revenue purposes. There is one thing which I wanted to point out in the agricultural report, because it is a deliberate misstatement. It says—

“Under the wheat pool—admission to which was denied to Queensland—a miller carrying on business here did not have freedom for his purchases, and had to obtain the consent of the pool; and this, notwithstanding there was no shortage of wheat in Australia.”

I want to point out that admission was not denied to Queensland. It was denied to Queensland by the Premier of this State declining to allow Queensland to go in it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Were you in Toowoomba when that happened?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, I was.

Mr. BRENNAN: What happened?

Mr. MOORE: We had meetings.

Mr. BRENNAN: The member for Cunningham and the member for Warwick turned it down.

Mr. MOORE: The same old tale! Does the hon. member know that the Secretary for Agriculture asked for a vote to be taken of the farmers' organisations throughout Queensland as to whether we wanted to go into the pool or not? And does he know that a majority of seventeen said “Yes”?

Mr. BRENNAN: Did not the Premier say, “Tell us what you want”?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, and did not we tell him?

Mr. BRENNAN: No, you could not agree amongst yourselves.

Mr. MOORE: A majority agreed, but we had a politician instead of a statesman, and he could not see that the loss of a few votes would be more than balanced by the benefit to the State. Then we find in the Agricultural report they say, “Under the wheat pool—admission to which was denied to Queensland”—trying to make out that the Federal Government had denied Queensland the right of coming in. They were not statesmen enough to see that Queensland had to buy wheat as well as sell it. They thought they would be able to come in on a good market under a wheat pool, and not have any of the expense connected with it. The farmers knew what they wanted, and asked for it. It was the State Government who did not know their business. I would like to point out also a statement which says—

“Trade between States under the Constitution is free, and the war caused no position under which the supply of dairy produce was endangered or threatened with shortage; and yet the manufacturers were subjected to administration that had no practical meaning or result.”

I wonder does the Treasurer realise that there is an amount of £37,000 still owing on account of that 10s. a head which was charged on cattle which went over the border. Yet they talk about trade between the States being free.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: That case was the subject of a High Court decision.

Mr. MOORE: One question I asked in this Chamber, to which I never got an answer, might have had a very material bearing on that case. I asked, Was there any man in Queensland who took cattle over the border who paid the 10s. a head without signing the agreement to bring them back again? I endeavoured three times to get a reply to that, and I never got it. Had that reply been given, the decision in the case would have been different. This is what the Agricultural Report says—

“There were 42,735 owners of cattle, with an average herd for each of 135 head, but few of those owning up to 100 head; the average was slightly under twenty-seven head, and this class may be taken to represent the majority of farmers and dairymen.”

These are the beef barons of Queensland that hon. members opposite are so fond of referring to. The report further says in regard to the pools—

“Under normal conditions of trade nothing could be said on that score; but if the meaning of the word ‘pool’ means share-and-share alike, Queensland manufacturers should not have been penalised to the advantage of the Southern manufacturers. The disclosures in the Federal Parliament concerning pools and the effect of them, added to the experience of producers and manufacturers in Queensland, would not seem to encourage further adventure into that kind of business now that the war is over and trade is returning to normal avenues.”

What has happened was this: Mr. Massey-Greene came up with his scheme for a dairy produce pool and put it before the farmers and the co-operative factories, and they carried it by a vote of 85 per cent. to go into a pool in which they got control of their business. There has been a certain amount of discussion over this pool business, and I would like to get the true facts into “Hansard,” so that people can see what the position is. A little pamphlet was sent out by Mr. Carter, the hon. member for Port Curtis, and a reply was sent in by Mr. T. Flood Plunkett. I want to get this into “Hansard” to let the farmers know exactly what happened. Mr. Plunkett was the Queensland representative on that pool, and his views are worth giving. He says here—

“BUTTER CONTROL.

“To the Editor.

“Sir,—I have been handed a pamphlet compiled by George Carter, M.L.A., that is being distributed throughout the dairying districts with reference to Commonwealth control of butter, and cited as “an extraordinary transaction.” As the information contained in this pamphlet does not put the position fairly before the dairy producers, I feel it my duty as a member of the Commonwealth Dairy Produce Pool Committee to put the facts before them, that they may judge for themselves. The first error in the pamphlet is that the price in February, 1919,

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was 168s. 8d. The price was 186s. 8d., a difference of £18 per ton. The pamphlet states that the London price for Danish butter in 1917 was 500s. per cwt. This was for a small parcel of 70 boxes sold in Manchester. Practically no other Danish butter arrived in England during 1917. Up to the end of the 1917 season every factory was free to export its own butter, which it did, and received full London prices, none of which were higher than 216s. per cwt. The pamphlet says 233s. 4d. From the 1st of July, 1917, the first Imperial contract commenced at 151s. f.o.b., the Imperial Government paying interest on the butter from the time it went into store. The pamphlet says that in May, 1917, the Hughes Government fixed the price for export at 154s., less $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. This is also wrong, as the conference which appointed the Federal Butter Committee did not meet in Melbourne until the 26th July, 1917, and then started negotiations for the sale of 1917-18 butter. The question to be considered was whether the Imperial Government could ascertain the fair market value of butter in store in Australia in view of the improbability of being able to carry it, on account of the submarine menace, and eventually it was decided to accept 151s. f.o.b. as a basis. Therefore the pamphlet is wrong again. The pamphlet states that the cost of freight, marketing, and other charges amounted to 25s. per cwt. This is wrong again, as the cost for the full season 1917-18 was as high as 35s. per cwt., and never less than 30s. The war risk of 5 per cent., marine risk of $1\frac{1}{4}$ per cent., and freight at 12s. 6d. per cwt., besides the cost of air-craft insurance, heavy port dues, cold storage for protracted periods, largely increased the cost on the British Government. The pamphlet omits to state that out of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. deducted $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was returned to the factories. After negotiating, the British Government agreed with the committee to return half their gross profits on Australian butter. This amount was 38s. per cwt. The pamphlet asks, 'Where is the difference or who got the money?' The British Government, out of their profits, paid interest in Australia for an average of two months and for about four months in the United Kingdom. The usual machinery for distribution was utilised throughout the Kingdom, and this was obviously another 3 per cent. storage at both ends, interest from time stored, until date released, averaging about twenty weeks. Fire and air-craft insurance, distribution, commission, exchange, and war service controls absorbed 18s. 6d. per cwt., possibly it was 19s. That is how their half was utilised.

"Instead of Australian producers waiting for their share of the profit of 1918-19 season's shipments, it has been anticipated and is being paid to them now. The pamphlet says there is no remission of any profits though it must have been approximately 35s.; and then says that the farmer should have received more money for his butter. Therefore, British consumers paid all these charges by reason of the higher price put on to him for his butter. No speculator could

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exist in this matter as the producer sells his butter direct to the British Government. To put the butter position more fully before the producers, the State Government transactions must be taken into account. In 1915, during a drought, they seized butter for which they paid as low as 140s. per cwt., less 2 per cent., when the market price in Victoria was over 220s. Instead of realising this price, they sold 747 boxes at 225s., and a small portion in Queensland at 196s. The balance of this butter was shipped to the Agent-General in London, and the highest obtained averaged about 179s. 4d. net f.o.b. The best price the Government received in London was 16s. or 17s. per cwt. lower than that received by factories who had their butter on the London market at the same time. The surplus received by the Government was supposed to have been distributed among factories, but they never yet, although they have repeatedly asked, have been allowed to see what it cost to handle the butter, which it was known was far in excess of what would be ordinary distribution. We know the Government seized 54 tons from one factory at 140s., when that company had been offered 184s. per cwt., with the result that the producers received £2,376, or $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per lb. less for that month than they should have received. It will be interesting for producers to watch the attitude of the Government whom Mr. Carter supports between now and next State elections. The price of 20,000 tons of beef had been fixed for five years. Will butter be next?

"I am, sir, etc.,

"T. FLOOD PLUNKETT.

"Beaueserti, 8th December."

The British Government came to the rescue of the Queensland farmers when we did not know what to do with our produce. The farmers were glad to get the terms that were offered, yet we have members opposite getting up and decrying what the British Government did, and saying that the British Government robbed the producers of Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: Not the British Government, but the profiteers.

Mr. MOORE: It was a direct sale to the British Government. There was not a profiteer in it. The hon. member for Toowoomba may know something about law, but he knows nothing about butter. I doubt if he knows much about law. If he had a case and lost it, he would say it was because it was a Tory judge, and he did not get justice. It is a pity that a member representing a farming constituency should deliberately go out of his way to make statements decrying the British Government, which came to the rescue of the farmers when the Queensland Government would not do anything.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Federal Government pooled everything, and pooled us too.

Mr. MOORE: If the hon. member would go into the Co-operative Butter Factory in his own town he would know all about it, and he would not make such statements as he makes here. I strongly resent any member of this House decrying what the British Government did for the farmers. Hon. members should admire them for their generosity. If the Queensland Government had said that they would advance 250s. or anything else,

and keep the butter in cold stores it would have been something, but the Queensland Government did nothing. When the farmers outside read this reply they will see how they were treated by the British Government. The farmers unanimously agreed to go into another Federal pool. If they had preferred the Queensland Government they would have said so, and would not have gone into another Federal pool. I hope they will have a pool for butter, for wheat, and for meat too. It is better to have a pool for meat than to have our meat commandeered at 3d. per lb.

Mr. WHITEFOOT: The consumers have got to be considered.

Mr. MOORE: And so have the producers. What about the man who spends all his time and money producing cattle—is he not to be considered?

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

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move that the House do now adjourn. The first business to-morrow will be the continuation of the debate on the Financial Statement. It is hoped it will be finished at an early hour, and then we will proceed to a more formal discussion of the resolutions themselves.

Question put and passed.

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