

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER 1920

Electronic reproduction of original hardcopy

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 7 DECEMBER, 1920.

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

QUESTIONS.

METROPOLITAN WATER AND SEWERAGE BOARD

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked the Treasurer--

“In view of the Auditor-General's report upon the working of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board, wherein he states that the progress of the work at the 31st December last was of a very unsatisfactory nature; and in view of the extraordinary rumours which are being circulated concerning the efficiency of the preparatory work in connection with the sewerage scheme, will he inform the House--

"1. If it is the intention of the Government to cause an inquiry to be made into the affairs of the board?"

"2. If so, will he appoint a Royal Commission, presided over by a judge of the Supreme or District Court, to make the inquiry?"

"3. Is the reported increase in the water rate of 25 per cent. to be charged for the year 1921 in respect of all lands upon which any building is erected, and also the advance of 27.27 per cent. (approximately 27½ per cent.) on the rate charged on vacant lands for 1920, due to mismanagement of the board's affairs?"

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) replied—

"1. The Government's intention to appoint a Royal Commission was announced some weeks ago.

"2. A competent commissioner will be appointed. The Government is endeavouring to secure the services of a water and sewerage expert.

"3. The hon. member should know that this is entirely a matter for the board, which is elected by the ratepayers."

TERM OF OFFICE OF AUDITOR-GENERAL.

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

"1. Was the present Auditor-General appointed under agreement with the Government that his term of office was to be for a specific number of years only?"

"2. If so, for what number of years?"

"3. Will he lay on the table of the House all correspondence between the Government and the Auditor-General relating to Mr. Robertson's appointment to the office?"

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

"1. No.

"2. See answer to No. 1.

"3. I table it now."

Whereupon the Premier laid upon the table the correspondence asked for.

FORFEITED PRICKLY-PEAR AND AGRICULTURAL SELECTIONS.

Mr. MORGAN asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"How many—(a) prickly-pear selections; (b) ordinary agricultural selections (either under perpetual lease or the old tenure), were forfeited during the year ended 30th June last?"

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

"(a) Prickly-pear selections, 309; (b) agricultural selections—agricultural farms, 122; perpetual lease selections, 292; total, 414."

PAYMENT OF EXPENSES OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNS.

Mr SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Premier—

"1. Did the State pay, or was it committed to pay, the expenses of any member or members of Parliament while engaged in promoting the Labour party

interests in—(a) the 1919 Federal election campaign; (b) the New South Wales State election campaign of 1920?"

"2. If so, what members benefited?"

"3. What were the sums paid or payable to each member in respect of the matters mentioned in 1?"

The PREMIER replied—

"1. to 3. Certain members received out-of-pocket expenses to visit Southern States to reply to grossly misleading statements about Queensland which were being circulated during the Federal election. No payments were made to members participating in the New South Wales elections."

LICENSES TO MOTOR-DRIVERS.

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

"What decision has he come to in regard to the desirability of issuing licenses to motor-drivers who must first be required to demonstrate their efficiency?"

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

"Matter is under consideration."

EXPENDITURE ON OUTDOOR RELIEF BY UNION OFFICIALS.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Home Secretary—

"1. In connection with the sum of £78,859 11s. 4d., expenditure on outdoor relief during last financial year, was any of this relief distribution entrusted to union officials; if so, how much, and at what centres?"

"2. What amount in outdoor relief has been expended during the current financial year up to 30th November?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1. No.

"£29,895 6s. 2d."

COST OF SCHOOL TEACHER'S RESIDENCE AT RUNCORN.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"1. What was the actual cost of the erection of the school teacher's residence at Runcorn, exclusive of materials used from the old building?"

"2. What was the approximate value of the old materials used?"

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

"1. and 2. £896 12s. 9d., inclusive of an additional veranda, etc. Materials from the old building were not used, the sum of £57 having been realised by the sale of the old residence for removal—making net cost of new residence £839 12s. 9d."

BARCOO BY-ELECTION—ACTION AGAINST DEFAULTING ELECTORS.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Attorney-General—

"1. Is it a fact that after the by-election at Barcoo, consequent upon the Hon.

T. J. Ryan's resignation, his department instructed the police magistrate to issue notices to 2,000 electors who failed to record their votes?

"2. If so, will he inform the House as to whether the magistrate has taken action; and, if so, the reasons furnished by the defaulting electors?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*) replied—

"1. The returning officer for Barcoo issued notices to those electors of the Barcoo electoral district who failed to record their votes at the by-election referred to.

"2. Action was taken against those electors whose reasons for not voting were considered unsatisfactory."

DESTRUCTION OF FLYING FOXES BY FLAME-THROWERS OR POISONOUS GASES.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Agriculture—

"1. What further action, if any, is being taken by the department in the matter of the destruction of flying foxes by means of flame-throwers or poisonous gases?

"2. Does he consider that the previous experiments were successful?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. J. N. Gillies, *Etcham*) replied—

"1. None at present with flame-throwers, as the cost of the application is too great, but the department is awaiting a consignment of poisonous gases in order to continue the experiments.

"2. Yes, excepting as regards cost, and the danger to unskilled persons when using flame-throwers."

PRICES OF MEAT AT THE STATE BUTCHER'S SHOP, VICTORIA PLACE, SOUTH BRISBANE.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"What are the differences in the retail prices at the State shops in Victoria Place, South Brisbane, of—(a) the chief cuts of beef and mutton; and (b) popular lines of fish now, as compared with those charged at the opening of these shops?"

The TREASURER replied—

	Price when Shop Opened, 11th March, 1918.	Present Price, May, 1920.
(a) State Butchery—		
Prime rib roast ...	4½d.	5½d.
Rump steak ...	7½d.	9d.
Beef steak ...	5½d.	5½d.
Corned round ...	5½d.	6½d.
Legs of mutton ...	7d.	9d.
Shoulder of mutton ...	4½d.	5½d.
Loin chops ...	7d.	9d.
(b) State Fishery—		
Sea mullet ...	4d. and 4½d.	5½d., 6d., and 6½d.
Mangrove mullet ...	7d.	8d.
Bream ...	8d.	8d.
Whiting ...	9d.	10d.
Gar ...	8d.	8d.
Tailor ...	7½d.	8d."

CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

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

SUPPLY—RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE.

EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE.

HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR.

The PREMIER moved—That £2,868 be granted for "His Excellency the Governor," balance of vote. There was very little change in this vote, and he did not know that any explanation of it was required, but if hon. members desired any information in regard to it, he would be pleased to furnish such information.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): There was an increase of nearly £200 in the item of travelling expenses, printing, stationery, postage, etc., and he should like to know what was the reason for that increase? There were one or two things he would like to draw attention to on the chief vote.

The PREMIER: We are discussing the Governor now, and it would, perhaps, be better to wait till we come to the departmental vote.

Mr. MOORE: That would be satisfactory.

The PREMIER: The increase in the amount required for "Travelling Expenses, Printing, Stationery, Postage, etc." was owing to the higher cost of travelling these times. The amount expended last year exceeded the amount voted, and the Government this year were not asking any more than was thought would be sufficient to meet the Governor's requirements when travelling about the State during the financial year. It was a vote over which the Government had very little control, as the Governor must be allowed a fair amount of discretion.

Mr. MOORE: What is the uniform for?

The PREMIER: He did not see any mention of a uniform in the vote.

Mr. MOORE: The Auditor-General's report, at page 164, mentioned uniforms. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: We are on the Estimates. Question put and passed.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER moved—That £110 be granted for "Executive Council." There was practically no change in that vote, and no explanation was required.

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

The PREMIER moved—That £1,840 be granted for "Legislative Council." The amount expended last year was £1,578, and the increase was chiefly due to increased salaries and a small additional amount was required for postages, telegrams, etc.

Mr. MOORE: He was surprised to see that vote on the Estimates at all. When the Constitution Act Amendment Bill was going through in 1915, the Premier pointed

Mr. Moore.]

out that the first plank of the fighting platform of the Labour party has been the abolition of the Legislative Council. It seemed an extraordinary thing, when a vote was taken on the abolition of the Legislative Council and there was a 66,000 majority in favour of the retention of the Legislative Council, that the Government decided to honour the wishes of the people, but they did not attempt to honour the wishes of the people on every occasion. That was one of the votes that he thought would be cut out.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The question of the abolition of the Legislative Council is not involved in this vote.

Mr. MOORE: It was involved, as there was a sum of money on the Estimates for expenditure in connection with the Council.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that the question is that £1,540 be granted for the Legislative Council. The hon. member must recognise that it is not in order to discuss the question of the existence of the other Chamber on this vote. The amendment of the Constitution is not before the Committee.

Mr. MOORE: He moved as an amendment that the vote be reduced by £1.

The PREMIER: Who would you like the £1 taken from? The messenger?

Mr. MOORE: Taken off the salary of the President of the Council. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: His salary is not appropriated under this vote.

Mr. MOORE: Then, taken off the Chairman of Committees.

The PREMIER: His salary is not appropriated in this vote, either. Have another guess.

Mr. MOORE: During the last election members of the Upper House stated that if the Upper House was not abolished they would resign.

The TREASURER: Do you want it abolished?

Mr. MOORE: He wanted it abolished as at present constituted, and have an elected Chamber so that they would have some protection for the people. It was an unsatisfactory position for that House to be in. They had had definite statements made that the Council was to be abolished, and he wanted the Government to keep their pledges.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He noticed the number of employees connected with the Council was the same—seven. Also, he noticed that the person who had received the least consideration was the one who was at the bottom rung of the ladder. The Clerk of the Council advanced from £480 to £510, the messengers from £385 to £500; while the office cleaner went up by only £15.

The HOME SECRETARY: Those people are under an award.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Repeatedly the poor widows and orphans had been trotted out, yet they found that one of the first things done by the Government when they started increasing salaries was to recognise that particular person to the extent of £15! Did hon. members opposite approve of that form of dealing with advances?

The PREMIER: The office cleaner in your time was getting £45 in the Legislative Council.

[Mr. Moore.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was all very well for the Premier to trot that out. Since this Government had come into office the cost of living had gone up at a tremendous rate. Surely, it would not be suggested that it was possible for the office cleaner to live on £95 a year. Yet the Government, supported by people who were claiming they were out to help the person who was right down at the bottom of the ladder, had increased this particular salary by £15. Did hon. members opposite favour that kind of rise? If they did, they must have receded from the stand they repeatedly had taken up in the past. There was a fairly big increase in regard to postage, telegrams, and incidentals. Was that necessary? Would it not be possible to take something off that and give it to the poor office cleaner? He was sure the Premier would have some explanation to give as to why that condition of things existed.

The PREMIER said the salary provided was the salary fixed by the award which applied to office cleaners, and the salaries in connection with which large increases came under the agreements and awards of the court. A salary of £95 a year was not very large, but it was a vast increase on what was provided by the hon. member when he was a member of a Government. When the Labour party were in opposition they had to protest year after year to get the wages of some officers, who were only getting £39 a year, slightly increased. When the hon. gentleman got into financial difficulties in 1915, the first thing he did was to stop the £10 automatic increases provided by the regulations for junior officers of the public service getting £100 a year and upwards. The hon. gentleman had indulged in talk about extravagance this session and in previous sessions since he managed to get back to Parliament; but the first thing he now tried to do was to increase the Estimates and get a further amount provided. The hon. gentleman wanted to know why they were increasing the expenditure this year by £900,000, but he knew that most of it went in increased salaries and wages awarded by the court, and his first request now was that further increases should be provided. This Government would extend a fair deal to the public servants, and would not attempt, like the hon. gentleman, to avoid their obligations under the award. They recognised that the Government must be a model employer, and there would be no attempt to deprive the office cleaner or any other officer of increases. He did not think it was necessary to make any further explanation.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*) supported the amendment to reduce the vote by £1, and thought it was desirable that the Opposition should protest against the vote at all. He protested against the actions of the Government, which were contrary to the views they had been advocating. The Opposition were giving the Government an opportunity of showing whether they were sincere by enabling them to reduce the vote by £1.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*) supported the amendment, because the Council, as at present constituted, was a danger to Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In regard to the salary of £90, about which the Premier had given an explanation, there were two ways of dealing with matters. Some time ago a widow's goods were seized, and she was put into the law court, and the fraternity divided something like £13,000 of her property between them. He wanted to call the attention of the Premier and the hon. member for Rockhampton, who was always talking about the widows, to this, and to make clear the difference in treatment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Amendment negatived, and question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER moved—That £4,230 be granted for "Legislative Assembly." There were a few alterations, brought about by increases for salaries under the classification, but there was a reduction in the total vote, as compared with the expenditure last year, and also as compared with the vote last year, when they had to provide a retiring allowance for the late Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. That had not to be provided this year.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked for what period the messenger worked who was put down at £60?

The PREMIER: He was informed by the Speaker that this messenger was employed during the session, and in the recess work was found for him in other departments.

Mr. FRY: It seemed a very small amount, to pay him at the rate of £60 a year.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: He is only a lad of fourteen.

Mr. FRY: They had heard the Chamber ring from wall to wall, and from floor to roof, with accounts of the hardships men experienced in trying to make ends meet, and he could not allow the matter to pass without inquiry. The amount was very small, and he would like to be reassured that the boy was only fourteen years of age. These boys generally grow very old before their salaries were increased. (Laughter.)

Question put and passed.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

The PREMIER moved—That £15,867 be granted for "Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly." There was a slight increase over the actual appropriation last year, but the expenditure last year was more than the appropriation. Certain increases were provided in the salaries of the reporting and other staffs. He did not think it was necessary to call attention to any other items, but he would answer any question hon. members desired to put.

Mr. MOORE called attention to an item of £1,000 in contingencies for "Refreshment Rooms." The Auditor-General, in his report on the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms, pointed out that there was a [4 p.m.] loss of £1,485 13s. 4d., and an actual loss of £421 on the food.

It seemed a most extraordinary thing that the taxpayers of Queensland should be called upon to pay for the meals of members of Parliament.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOORE: Then, salaries had been increased up to £500, and, surely to goodness, they should be self-supporting! He suggested that an increase in the charge of meals be made.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: What would you suggest?

Mr. MOORE: It was not for him to dictate to the Refreshment Rooms Committee. But if 1s. 6d. would cover it, why not make it that figure? He also noticed that "Hansard" and "Printing" cost more than the estimate last year, and he did not know that it was altogether to the benefit of the people of the State that twenty-four free "Hansards" should be given to every member. They cost a good deal of money, and they all knew that a large amount of the printing matter connected with the House was wasted.

The PREMIER: What about cutting out "Hansard" altogether?

Mr. MOORE: He would not care, as he did not send out a single copy—it would not affect him at all. There were Labour members who sent "Hansards" into his electorate with passages marked, but they really did not do much good. (Laughter.) He did not think it was worth the cost.

Many reductions could be made in the expenditure at present, and that item was one of them. Parliamentary papers and proof copies of "Hansard" were left lying about the committee rooms often unopened. He thought the Printing Committee could economise in many ways. With regard to the item "Library Books, Binding, and Periodicals," which he noticed was cut down from £500 to £300, he would like to know the reason for the reduction? Were they going to cut out some of the papers, or reduce the number of books?

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): Concerning the price charged for meals, he had given notice of a question relating to it, and was told it was a matter for the Refreshment Rooms Committee. They could not get as good a meal outside under 2s. 6d. as the meal they paid 1s. for in the refreshment-rooms. It was time something was done to adjust matters.

He particularly wanted to call attention to the item of "Repairs, Keening Grounds in Order, etc." for which £104 was voted. If any little thing went wrong, such as a tap out of order, or a chair being broken, the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly had to write to the Works Department, who probably would send a couple of men to inspect the damaged article, and, perhaps, a fortnight might elapse before the thing was put in order. He thought they should revert to the old system, whereby such matters were left in the hands of the Clerk of the Assembly to fix up immediately by direction of the Speaker or the committee in charge.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: Are you not aware that the members of the committee have already given those directions?

Mr. PETRIE: What he suggested was that an amount should be placed on the Estimates to cover such repairs, without having to approach the Works Department.

Mr. MORGAN: Considering that everybody was economising at present, he thought the time had come when Parliament should also exercise economy. He thought the cost of "Hansard and Printing" could be

Mr. Morgan.]

reduced by at least £2,000, and he hoped the Premier would endeavour to see that it was carried out.

Regarding the refreshment-rooms, it was a well-known fact that the meals which members got there for 1s. could not be obtained in any hotel for less than 3s. He did not advocate that a profit should be made, but the Committee must see that 1s. was not sufficient. It should be at least 1s. 6d., which might meet the cost. They should let people outside see that they were prepared to economise, and do without things at present which at other times they would be justified in having.

The PREMIER: With regard to the question of charges in the refreshment-rooms, that matter was now under revision by the committee. It had been realised by everyone that the charges were far less than the meals could be supplied for, and the committee would be justified in increasing the charge. Members got no particular advantage from the small charge made, and yet there was much misunderstanding outside of Parliament. Some people thought that free meals were supplied to members. He hoped the committee would come to an early decision, and make provision for a reasonable increase.

With regard to "Hansard and General Printing," he had already deliberated with the Speaker on that matter. No doubt, the £8,000 which was required for the publication of "Hansard" and other printing was a very large sum, and £9,500 was expended last year, owing, no doubt, to last session being an unusually long one. It was, of course, a valuable thing to have as complete a record as possible of the parliamentary proceedings; but, surely, no one could argue that a complete verbatim report was required on every occasion!

The rule was that verbatim reporting was done until midnight. After that only a condensed report was given. He thought it would be a good thing if the Speaker directed the "Hansard" staff to reduce the cost of reporting by condensing when the House went into Committee, and also during the introductory stages of Bills, and on occasions of that kind. Of course, on such occasions as the Financial Statement and debates on second readings of Bills members would get their speeches fully reported. It would be some guidance to the chief of the "Hansard" staff to know that members were in favour of reducing the cost of producing "Hansard," and he thought a certain amount could be saved if the Speaker gave instructions to refrain from circulating the first proof of "Hansard." Other measures of that kind could be adopted and would effect some saving.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): He did not quite agree with the Premier so far as exercising economy by curtailing "Hansard." At present each member was supplied with twenty-four copies, and very few were posted, probably due to the fact that the postage was increased to 4s. for each "Hansard." He was not in favour of cutting down the reports of speeches, whether made in Committee or in the House; the reports should appear fully, as they had done in the past. There were a lot of valuable reasons given in Committee by members, and they should be reported in full.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What about reporting after 12 o'clock?

[*Mr. Morgan.*]

Mr. CORSER: He was in favour of reporting after 12 o'clock at night, especially the speeches of Opposition members. Owing to the rule relating to no full reports after midnight when they had the all-night sitting the other night, a lot of new members on the Opposition side did not get reported at all, and their speeches were lost to the country. He was not suggesting that there should be any cutting down of the reporting staff. So far as the "Hansard" staff themselves were concerned, they had the sympathy of every member of the House for the way they carried out their work under adverse conditions. He was quite satisfied that the members of the "Hansard" staff had to work hard and fully earned their money—(Hear, hear!)—and he would like to see full reports being given all the time, even if they had to strengthen the staff. With regard to the refreshment-room a lot had been said about the increase in the cost of "the tucker." There seemed to be an impression amongst members that the price should be increased, and no doubt they would find that it would be made possible to meet that desire.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): He was one who objected to any curtailment of the rights and privileges of members of the House, and especially to any curtailment of "Hansard." He was in favour—and had been in favour for a number of years—of "Hansard" being distributed free to all persons who made application for it. He was quite satisfied that, if "Hansard" was sent free to every person who applied for it, then there would not be thirty-four members sitting in opposition to-day. (Opposition dissent.) It was owing to the fact that members opposite got their speeches in the Tory papers, and owing to what these papers printed, that there were so many members opposite. That was why he wanted to see "Hansard" circulated gratis so that the people could read what the hon. members said in the House. He was out of the House when the previous vote went through, but if hon. members opposite wanted to curtail anything they should have curtailed the Governor's vote. Reference had been made to what members paid for their meals. If members opposite wanted to be logical all round, why did they not draw attention to the increased cost of postage? The Commonwealth Government increased the postage from 1d. to 2d. for letters and from 9d. to 1s. for telegrams, yet no hon. member opposite suggested an increase in the allowance to members to cover the cost of postage. He knew quite well, as a Northern member, that it cost far more for his letters and telegrams than the allowance he received from the Government. With regard to the refreshment-room, there had always been a loss in that department, and money always had to be voted to cover the loss. They did not want it to be understood outside that they were receiving free meals, and he did not feel disposed to increase the amount for meals. The country was not that poor that it could not afford to provide decent meals.

HON. W. BERTRAM (*Maree*): There were some conflicting statements from hon. members in connection with this vote. On the one hand it was urged by the Premier and Treasurer that he should curtail expenditure so far as Parliament was concerned. On the other hand he had been asked by the leader of the Nationalist party, the Hon. W. H. Barnes, and also by the hon. member for

Albert, to provide additional accommodation for them.

Mr. PETERSON: Because they cannot hit it together.

HON. W. BERTRAM: No. He was anxious to please members on both sides of the House. (Hear, hear!) The position, however, was that they could not provide accommodation for every member of the House without incurring additional expense. He was being continually urged by the Premier and Treasurer to curtail expenditure as far as possible. Yet he had a request from the hon. member for Toombul to provide a file of newspapers in the Nationalist party room, while they also had a request for more letter-boxes for members and for other things. These cost money. The hon. member for Albert also made a request that he be allowed to use the ex-Ministers' room. He could not provide separate rooms for all members. He did not know that the Nationalist party were put to a great inconvenience by having to go, as Government members had to, upstairs to pick up their mails. Members opposite were not consistent, as on the one hand they urged economy and on the other they [4.30 p.m.] were always asking for the expenditure of large sums of money. He was being continually urged by members of the Opposition to provide accommodation for members and to provide for additional expenditure.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Have you provided accommodation for members of the Legislative Council recently?

HON. W. BERTRAM: Not so far as he knew. The President of the Legislative Council might know; but he did not think they had provided any new accommodation for members of the Legislative Council for the past eight or ten months. The Premier had asked him if it was not possible to curtail expenditure in connection with printing, and, like the Premier and other hon. members, he thought there was scope for economy in that direction. He believed that thousands could be saved by curtailing expenditure in connection with the printing of parliamentary papers, but he dare not take it upon himself to curtail those papers unless the House approved of it. The Home Secretary, when he was Speaker, took it upon himself to curtail the manner in which amendments from the other Chamber were put before the Assembly, and a howl of indignation immediately arose.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: It was not at all satisfactory.

HON. W. BERTRAM: All he could say was that the system was in operation in other Parliaments, and he believed it had worked satisfactorily. A number of papers were sent to members every morning, costing many pounds to print, some of which were never opened. Every member was supplied with a proof of "Votes and Proceedings," a proof copy of "Hansard," and a copy of every paper that was printed. In many cases those papers were thrown in the waste-paper basket, and he thought, if the Printing Committee got seriously to work, £1,000 annually could be saved in that direction alone. The trouble was that the moment he exercised any right he had in that regard, there would be a howl of indignation from members—probably from members on the Government side as well as from members of the Opposition.

In regard to the cost of meals, both the hon. member for Burnett and the hon. member for Toombul knew that at the last meeting of the Refreshment-room Committee he did his utmost to have the price of meals raised; and if the price was not raised, it would not be the fault of the Speaker. As regards "Hansard," he had a chat with the Premier, who suggested that some method might be adopted whereby they could curtail expenditure, and he (Mr. Bertram) took it upon himself to immediately instruct the principal of the "Hansard" staff to curtail expenditure. He had asked the principal shorthand writer to cut down the reporting on the introductory stages of Bills, and it might be as well, while he was on the subject, to inform hon. members that he intended, in future, to prevent speeches on the introductory stages of Bills. He had also instructed the chief of the "Hansard" staff definitely to report speeches in Committee in the third person, and only to report fully on the second reading stage of a Bill.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Do you make any charge to members who occupy bedrooms in the Parliamentary Buildings?

HON. W. BERTRAM: There were a certain number of bedrooms available. Ministers of the Crown occupied bedrooms, the Speaker had a bedroom, and the leader of the Opposition and others also had bedrooms.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is the "others" I am referring to.

HON. W. BERTRAM: The Chairman of Committees had a bedroom, and the Whip of the Government party also had a bedroom, and he understood that those bedrooms were sometimes occupied by members of Parliament other than Ministers of the Crown. There was no harm in saying that the bedroom provided for the leader of the Opposition was sometimes occupied by persons other than the leader of the Opposition. He did not want to enter into a party debate, but he wished to impress upon members that the Premier had asked him to curtail expenditure in connection with "Hansard" and printing. They spent something like £9,600 last year in that connection, and he hoped they would be able to reduce the expenditure to £8,000 or a little less this year. In conclusion, he wished to say that the officers of Parliament—ho was speaking of the whole of the officers of Parliament—generally speaking, were underpaid. It was not too much to say that the officers of Parliament were discontented. He thought they had hardly been given a fair deal, and he expressed the hope that they would be dealt with more generously in the future. (Hear, hear!)

HON. W. H. BARNES: There were one or two matters he wished to specifically refer to, because the hon. member had made reference to the National party. He thought the request of the National party for a meeting-room was an absolutely fair one.

HON. W. BERTRAM: You got it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Yes; but the hon. member linked up the hon. member for Albert. He (Mr. Barnes) was an ex-Minister, and as such he was just as much entitled to enter the ex-Ministers' room as the hon. member for Albert, and he might say that, so far as the hon. member for Albert was

Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

concerned, he never took the slightest exception to it. But what was the position? It must not be forgotten that the Nationalist party represented at least the second highest number of votes so far as the electors of the State were concerned, and it was a reasonable thing for him, as leader of the party, to ask that they should have a meeting-room. Surely there was nothing improper or unfair in that, and he would have been wanting in his duty if he had not asked for it.

HON. W. BERTRAM: You asked for a bedroom also.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was perfectly true that he did ask for a bedroom; and if a bedroom was provided for the leader of the Opposition, surely it was not an unfair thing for the leader of the National party to have a similar concession! But the times were such that no man should take any exception if he did not get a bedroom. Whilst it would be just as much a convenience to him as to the leader of the Opposition to have a bedroom, he was perfectly prepared to waive that privilege in the interests of economy. The hon. member for Oxley asked a question by way of interjection which was not answered, and he (Mr. Barnes) had put the question more definitely, and that was not answered. Was it not a fact that members who were not occupying an official position and who were not members of the Cabinet were provided with bedrooms?

HON. W. BERTRAM: Was it not a fact that your brother occupied your room on occasions?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was simply asking a question, and the hon. gentleman was introducing party element into the business.

THE HOME SECRETARY: How does the Speaker know what Ministers do with their rooms?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Probably, the Speaker did not know what Ministers did with their rooms, and probably it was a good thing he did not. (Laughter.)

THE CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not suggesting anything improper. (Renewed laughter.) The hon. member for Bowen stated that he did not see why members should pay more for their meals because postages, etc., had gone up. Postages had gone up, but there was one phase of it that the hon. member did not mention, and that was the fact that members' allowances had gone up, too. He asked this question in dead earnest: Why should he, as a member of Parliament, expect to get a meal for 1s. when he knew other places in the city have had to raise their tariff? Members should not get something which they ought not to get, and he would get right behind the Speaker and the Premier if they were going to raise the tariff. He noticed that there was an amount of £1,000 on the Estimates for Refreshment-rooms. Did the Premier really mean that £1,000 was going to pay the cost of the Refreshment-rooms for the year? In spite of the fact that there was a loss of £1,300 last year in connection with the Refreshment-rooms, they deliberately put on the Estimates £1,000 which they knew could not, under ordinary circumstances, cover the cost.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.

THE HOME SECRETARY: You have been getting the benefit of some of the profits the drinkers have been making.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Whatever he had in the room—and he frequented the room fairly freely—he paid for at the tariff rates; but let members be honest with themselves and not talk to the gallery and say they wanted certain things done and then bring down estimates of expenditure which they knew were only pencil estimates and could not be realised. Under ordinary circumstances, the amount on the Estimates would not be sufficient to cover the expenditure.

THE HOME SECRETARY: It will if we do not sit more than six months.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He knew the Government were seeking to get out as soon as possible, and probably they would not sit for six months, and that might be a way out. With regard to "Hansard," he admitted there were plenty of people in the country who like to get "Hansard," but it was not going to be very serious if it were cut down one-half. Was it not very much better to give those men who were practically starving on the streets of the city money from that source rather than to keep "Hansard" as it was and starve those men? He hoped the Speaker and Premier would see that business methods were adopted.

MR. PETRIE contended that if a room were provided for members of the Legislative Council the same facility should be placed at the disposal of the Nationalist party. The furnishings in the room at the other end of the building must have cost about £150; the Building Committee had been totally ignored in the matter, and if that was going to continue he would resign. That had happened in the past in connection with the lavatories, with the result that certain portions of the building were left unconnected, and to make the alterations now would mean a lot of extra expense; the levels were wrong and a lot of extra work would have to be done.

THE HOME SECRETARY: That is not right.

MR. PETRIE: It was right, and the hon. gentleman, who was Speaker at that time, knew it as well as he did. It was a perfect farce to have committees which were hardly ever called together.

MR. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*) expressed entire accord with the suggestion that the additional proof copy of "Hansard" should be done away with, and that the delivery of copies of parliamentary papers to members each morning should be abolished. There could also be a curtailment in regard to the reports which were issued to members indiscriminately. Members could not hope to be conversant with every phase of public matters which were dealt with in the reports. An agricultural representative would be deeply interested in the annual report of the Department of Agriculture and Stock, and the same would apply in regard to members representing mining constituencies. Others would be interested in sugar, State industries, and so forth. Economy could be effected, however, in regard to the annual reports. Members might indicate to the Clerk or to Mr. Speaker which reports they were desirous of obtaining. They could then be supplied with those reports in which they would be interested, and not have their boxes filled with printing matter, the preparation of

which was very expensive, and which they might not have the time or inclination to peruse or make use of. There would also be a complete separate set in the library if a member thought he would like to look into another report he had not received. A system was initiated in the Federal Parliament while he was a member in regard to the "Votes and Proceedings." Members were asked to indicate whether they required bound volumes. Some members did not require them, especially those living at a distance. It would be as well for hon. members to have the opportunity of notifying that they would forego the receipt of those volumes. He did not welcome the suggested curtailment of "Hansard," because a lot of people in the country were interested greatly in what "Hansard" contained. That did not apply so much to metropolitan constituencies. Having represented a country constituency, he knew that the people did peruse "Hansard"; and in all seriousness he would say it was to their improvement mentally that they did so. (Hear, hear!) He deplored the custom amongst members and others to belittle "Hansard" and their parliamentary institutions. "Hansard" was not a light matter. There was a lot to be learned from it. He looked upon it as being the means of disseminating the different views and accumulated knowledge of the various members who specialized in that particular line. The reports in Committee already were curtailed sufficiently. They were very accurate, were well condensed, and contained the gist of what hon. members said.

At five minutes past 5 p.m..

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

Mr. FERRICKS (continuing): The hon. member for Burnett had said that twenty-four free "Hansards" were too many to allow each member. It might be for some constituencies, but not for all. In the electorate of Bowen, for instance, when he represented that constituency he could always find use for more than twenty-four "Hansards," because he was asked for them. He would suggest that each member advise the Government Printer at the beginning of the session how many "Hansards" he would require for the session, and that would save any waste.

Regarding the Refreshment-room, he wished to point out to members who had suggested that it should be a paying institution that, while he was prepared to admit that the charge was, perhaps, too liberal, they could not expect it to be made payable, because the staff of attendants had to be always there to cater for the 130 odd members of the Legislative Council and Legislative Assembly who might drop in at any time. The attendants and the supply of food had to be always there whether hon. members patronised the room or not. It would always have to be subsidised, because, if the price were risen to a figure which would make it a payable concern, some hon. members would not be able to afford to patronise it. He hoped that those suggestions would be taken into consideration.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*) drew attention to the fact that towards the latter portion of each year a horse, cart, and driver had been engaged, together with a messenger of the House, to convey bulky volumes of

"Votes and Proceedings" to members' houses. Those "Votes and Proceedings" cost a huge sum of money to prepare, and he would suggest to the Premier and the Speaker that they abolish them.

The PREMIER: When a member is first elected he is asked whether he wants them sent annually to him or not.

Mr. PETERSON: He was thankful to the Premier for that explanation. He thought now was the opportunity for members to hand in their names to the responsible officer and say they did not want them supplied. He considered that the copy of "Votes and Proceedings" in the library should be quite sufficient for members.

The PREMIER intimated that he would undertake to see that members were asked if they wanted them.

Mr. PETERSON was glad to have that assurance from the Premier, because it would wipe out the deficiency in the Refreshment-rooms, if there were a deficiency in the true sense of the term. With regard to private members occupying Ministers' bedrooms, he thought the time was ripe when they should take into consideration the possibility of doing away with those bedrooms. He did not see why members should be compelled to stay late at night, simply owing to a caprice of the Opposition. If members were able to get to their homes at a reasonable hour, they would not require bedrooms. He thought that Parliament should alter its time of meeting to an earlier hour.

With regard to the waste in printing matter, he was pleased that the Premier and the Speaker were prepared to economise. For the last four years attention had been called, not to a deliberate waste, but to an apparent waste, particularly in the mail room, and he was sure that the whole deficit, as far as the Refreshment-rooms were concerned, could easily be wiped out by methodically arranging printing matters. He thought economy could be effected, for instance, with regard to the preparation of questions by members. Some Government officials, instead of attending to the business of the State, spend half their time looking up questions for members opposite.

He did not altogether agree with the Premier's remarks concerning "Hansard," but he certainly thought economy could be effected. He did not think it wise to curtail the report of members' speeches, because, if they did, how were budding aspirants of Parliament to know what a member was doing? (Laughter.) Many candidates had won their election upon the speeches of sitting members, and he thought it would be unfair to them to curtail reports of the speeches.

Mr. FRY: He wished to protest against cutting down the reports of "Hansard," which should be a correct report of parliamentary proceedings. So far as "Hansard" was concerned, he sent out sixteen copies, and he had three copies sent to the House, making nineteen in all. He did not think he was receiving too many copies.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: Are you satisfied with "Hansard" as it is now?

Mr. FRY: It was very satisfactory as far as he knew. He had no fault to find with it.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: Condensation has been going on for the past three weeks.

Mr. Fry.]

Mr. FRY: He was disappointed with the reports of members' speeches during the all-night sitting. There were a number of new members who came straight from the country and their ideas were certainly of some value, particularly as they were fresh and were not tainted with the practice and abuses of Parliament.

Hon. W. BERTRAM: Do you know that to report an all-night sitting fully would mean keeping a big staff of both males and females on all night?

Mr. FRY: He did not want any all-night sittings at all, but if the Government wanted to have all-night sittings they must take the blame. He valued the copies of "Votes and Proceedings" which he received. He had occasion to use his copies during recess owing to the information they contained in the replies to questions asked by members of the Opposition. The hon. member for Normanby talked about the cost of preparing answers to questions, but during the last three or four years it was difficult to get information from the Government except by way of questions. So far as the accommodation was concerned he thought the Nationalist party were entitled to have a room to meet in just the same as the Government party or the official Opposition. He would assist the Speaker in any attempt to eliminate waste provided there was not an indulgence to cut out things that mattered. If the debate that day would have the effect of cutting out waste it would have been of some value. He would be one who would always raise his voice against the cutting down of the "Hansard" reports.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): They had been spending an hour or so in discussing the question of whether they could save some money by curtailing the reports in "Hansard." Probably the time had not been wasted. He suggested that the Printing Committee should meet, discuss this matter, and devise ways and means for saving expenditure in the matter of printing.

The PREMIER: Give me a free hand, and I will save £4,000 this year.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If he (Mr. Elphinstone) were given a free hand he could effect economies to a greater extent than that. It was remarkable that the members who spoke on the Government side made no reference to the 400,000 copies of the Governor's Speech which were circulated throughout Queensland during the last few months. They knew that the pathways and byways of the country were littered with copies of the Governor's Speech. That was an exasperating form of expenditure which ran into something like £4,000. Then they heard a question answered that day which showed how the Government had been financing Labour members who were touring the Southern States expounding the doctrines which had brought Queensland to the verge of ruin. Nothing was said about economies in those directions, but a lot of time was taken up talking about the saving of £100 or so in curtailing the reports in "Hansard." With regard to accommodation at Parliament House, he drew attention to certain monies which had been spent in finding accommodation for the surplus members of the Upper House. He asked the Speaker what about that expenditure, but the Speaker told them that he knew nothing about it. He was loth to take the Speaker

to task for saying he knew nothing about it, but he would do so if he were not the Speaker of the House. He thought the hon. member must be aware of it because the hon. member for Toombul, who was also a member of the Building Committee, was fully acquainted with the circumstances.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mr. Bertram was not the Speaker when that expenditure was incurred.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Because of the division of parties, he thought additional accommodation should be provided. He made bold to say that there were certain things taking place under the roof of Parliament House which were not altogether to the credit of the Legislative Assembly, and the sooner the Speaker or someone responsible took the matter in hand and saw that the good name of the establishment was kept up, the better it would be for the House. Regarding the question of bedroom accommodation, if it were going to cost money, why not charge members for that accommodation just the same as they would have to pay in other parts of the city. (Hear, hear!) Coming to the question of meals, why should they not pay for the cost of their meals? He objected to the statement that he enjoyed his meals at Parliament House at the cost of the country. He was sure that members would much prefer to pay an extra 6d. and wipe out the loss on the refreshment-room.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): They had been preaching economy in various directions, and it had been said more than once that if it were intended to practise economy [5.30 p.m.] they should begin at Parliament House, make a start right at home. Was this a time when the country should go on in the way in which it had been going, of giving members of Parliament special benefits and privileges? He took it that the time had come when they, as members of Parliament, needed to "take a pull" to themselves. Hon. members belittled some of the losses and reckoned that they were not a very great matter, but as he had said more than once in the Chamber, "if they looked after the pence the pounds would look after themselves," and that was never truer than at the present time. He contended that it was not fair to the people of the State that members should pay only 1s. for their meals; they should pay the full expense of every bit they ate.

If he understood the matter aright, the bedrooms in Parliament House were provided for the benefit of Ministers and certain officers of Parliament, but Ministers mostly. He had not a single word to say against Ministers having that convenience, when Parliament was sitting and when Parliament was not sitting, for that matter, but—whether what hon. members had said was correct he was not in a position to say—he did know that the bedrooms in Parliament House were spoken of outside as constituting a huge boarding-house for quite a number of persons who had no right to occupy them.

With regard to "Hansard," he could not follow the Premier all the way. "Hansard" should be a correct historical record of the proceedings of Parliament. He had obtained a considerable amount of information and instruction, particularly during the late election, with regard to land matters and the so-called repudiation Bill, from reading the speeches of men in Parliament at the time

when they were being considered. If they were going to cut down the speeches of members, they all knew how very easy it was, no matter how desirous one might be of putting the thing fairly and squarely in a curtailed report, for a member to feel that his remarks had not been accurately represented.

The PREMIER: He would have the same rights of correcting his speeches that he has now.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not understand that from the Premier. Whilst he was on the point, he believed they were all agreed with regard to the absolute correctness of "Hansard" reports generally. (Hear, hear!) He did not think a curtailment would be a very wise or necessary thing, and if hon. members did not take advantage of the copies of the Votes and Proceedings supplied to them, they ought to go out of Parliament. With regard to printing generally, however, he certainly thought a very huge saving could be made. If the Premier would carry out his promise that he would save £4,000 a year without curtailing "Hansard," he would give him the opportunity.

The PREMIER: Certainly not without curtailing "Hansard."

Mr. TAYLOR: He was not going to give the Premier the right to curtail "Hansard," because he knew that it would be only one side that would be reported. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: It would apply to both sides.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Printing Committee would find the lockers in the various rooms bursting, even at that moment, with documents and all kinds of printing which at the end of the session were carried away and destroyed.

With regard to the accommodation which the Nationalist party asked for, he would point out that they had not asked for any luxuries. The expenditure they desired might run into £30, £40, or £50, and he hoped the discussion would be productive of some good.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): The Temporary Chairman, having a knowledge of the printing trade, would agree that if any money was to be saved it must be saved in the primary cost. The distribution of a few extra copies would not affect the great cost of printing, which was in the preparation and setting of matter. A few additional runs on the machine, and a few additional sheets of paper would make very little addition to the cost. If any great saving was to be effected, the reports themselves must be cut down—the actual reports, not the number of reports. The whole vote amounted to £15,000, and they were not going to save much in an expenditure of £15,000 by cutting out a few copies here and a few copies there. But he was more concerned about the general charge that was made by the hon. member for Oxley regarding hon. members. He did not think any general charge of that nature should be levelled by an hon. member unless some opportunity was given him of placing the whole of the circumstances, as he knew them, before the Assembly and members were able to pass judgment upon them. Members of the Assembly should not be allowed to rest under the imputation made by the hon. member for Oxley, and he hoped some step would be taken to see that the hon. member for Oxley had an opportunity of substantiating the statements he had made.

So far as the refreshment-rooms were concerned, he thought members ought to be prepared to pay for what they got. The meal they got was worth much more than is, and he would be astonished to find that any member of the Assembly would refuse to pay the amount that he ought to pay for the very excellent meal and the very excellent attendance he got in the refreshment-room. He was astonished to think that that had not been done before. He believed it was an old, old custom; but members were coming to a sense of their responsibilities in that matter, and if they were going to pay for what they got it would be a very decent and very just thing to do. He was not concerned much about the provision for the various parties in Parliament so far as their party meetings were concerned, but he did think that an Opposition so united, so one-aim-and-object, so one-in-their-desires for the advancement of the country—that an Opposition so situated ought to have sufficient brotherly love amongst them to say to the other section, "You can come here on Wednesday or whatever day you like and hold your caucus." What special accommodation did members of the Government party have? They had one little writing-room downstairs and the library.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: You have No. 1 committee-room.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: No. 1 committee-room was open to all members of the House at any time they liked to use it. Let them come along any Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock. Just drop in, and of course they would just drop out. (Laughter.) If members of the Opposition liked to sign the pledge probably they would be allowed to stay there for good.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): He was sure, after what hon. members on both sides had said, that the loss the country had sustained on account of the refreshment-room would be obviated in the future. It would be admitted by everyone that a huge loss was constantly being made in connection with the printing of reports and other things. The Government Printer was far too generous in dealing out the numerous reports and papers, and it seemed, if those reports were made available to those hon. members who desired them, that the case would be amply met. He crossed swords with the hon. member for Bremer when he said that it was not necessary to economise in the number of reports distributed, and it was in the setting up of the type where economy could be effected. They all knew that the cost of ordinary paper had increased to four or five times what it was previously, and it was, surely, wise to effect economy wherever possible in that direction.

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

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (continuing:.) No matter of economy should be too small for the consideration of this House. Whether the matter was little or great, they should attack it, and economise where feasible.

Mr. MOORE complained of the nature of the departmental reports which were now being made, and said it appeared as if instructions already had been given in the various departments to cut down. Previously, reports contained remarks and comments by the persons making them. One of

Mr. Moore.]

the main features should be the suggestions of the men who were in charge of the various departments. They knew exactly how they wanted to run the various departments, and their suggestions should be useful. The reports had been getting smaller and smaller, and if they continued cutting down, there soon would not be any report.

Question put and passed.

PREMIER AND CHIEF SECRETARY'S DEPARTMENT.
CHIEF OFFICE.

The PREMIER moved—That £16,815 be granted for "Chief Office." There appeared to be an increase as compared with the previous appropriation; but the amount which had been expended was much higher than that appropriated. The extra sum asked for had been necessitated by the increased classification, and there was a larger amount required in respect of "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses." For years the amount asked for under this heading had been less than the previous year's expenditure. The expenditure had been over £10,000 last year, and it was thought necessary to place on the Estimates the £10,000 which might be required for this year.

Mr. MOORE asked whether the £10,000 included the amount expended in connection with the Governor's Speech, which had been set out as propaganda.

The PREMIER: No, it does not cover that.

Mr. MOORE: Other items of expenditure were specified, and there seemed to be little left which would be covered by "Incidentals and Miscellaneous Expenses." He would like to be furnished with details.

The PREMIER: I will give you the details.

Mr. TAYLOR supported the deputy leader of the Opposition in his attempt to ascertain the particular items covered by the £10,000. Quite a number of small items were set down, but they had no particulars whatever regarding that item. They had been told it had been the custom in the past to ask for £5,000, and it had been found that the expenditure had simply doubled that sum.

(Sitting suspended between 6 p.m. and 7 p.m.)

Mr. TAYLOR (continuing): They had no idea of how the very £10,000 would be expended. Another item which the Premier might also give them some information upon was that with regard to railway fares and freights, printing, stationery, etc., which had gone up from £1,700 to £2,800, or an increase of £700. No doubt there were well-earned increases of salary on the part of the officers concerned.

The PREMIER said that there had been a particularly heavy expenditure this year on account of entertaining distinguished visitors. In connection with the visit of Lord Jellicoe £245 was spent, Sir Ross Smith and party £337, repairs to Sir Ross Smith's aeroplane cost £436. Then there were expenses in connection with entertaining Sir R. Birdwood. There was £615 for expenses of the Premier to England. The upkeep of motor-car for part of the year was £195, petty cash £170; postages, £110; telegrams, £312; telephones, £99; and legal expenses, £195. Ministers' tour in the North £365, and Acting Premier's visit to the Premier's Conference £100. There were various allowances paid to members of the staff for overtime and one thing and another, and an allowance made to the widow of the discoverer of

[Mr. Moore.

Cympic. Amongst other items there was an allowance granted to Mr. Ellis on account of parliamentary duties, Dr. Kidston's funeral £109, fees to police magistrates in connection with examinations £40, steamer fares, overtime for messenger, items for books, and sundries. Then there were expenses in connection with an inquiry into the price of flour and bread, and various other items of that kind, aggregating the amount mentioned. It was a particularly heavy year last year with regard to these contingencies, but for some years past the vote had been exceeded on each occasion; apparently the Chief Secretary had known that the vote would be exceeded. He thought that it was a more honest practice to put down the amounts which they expected would be required. Looking at the details he had given, he should not think that the vote would be exceptional this year, except that the cost of his own tour would be charged, and that was the only extraordinary expense that he knew of.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Are there any election expenses to go in?

The PREMIER: That would come under the Justice Department.

Mr. CORSER: It was a bad practice for the department to incur such tremendous expenditure under the heading of "Miscellaneous and Incidental Expenses"; it would be far better if the Estimates showed the various amounts. The hon. gentleman had disclosed a few thousand pounds out of the £10,000 expended, but that did not give them the information they wanted. Last year \$5,000 was appropriated and \$10,430 spent. The Premier referred to the private secretary to the leader of the Opposition, who was paid by Parliament. Was the parliamentary secretary to the Opposition to be made a political appointment by the Government? The Government were going to deny the leader of the Opposition the right to appoint his own secretary, and were denying to Mr. Ellis the right to continue the work.

The PREMIER: The leader of the Opposition can have an officer of the department like I have.

Mr. CORSER: The Premier had the right to select his private secretary and wanted to select one for the leader of the Opposition. It was a farce to say that the Government were going to appoint the private and confidential clerk to the Opposition. If that official acted contrary to Government members, probably it would be decided by caucus that he would have to go. He did not say that the Premier would be narrow-minded enough to say that the private secretary to the Opposition was incapable of carrying out his duties.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to point out to the hon. member that the present discussion is somewhat irregular on the vote now before the Committee. It has been the practice to discuss the whole of the department on the Chief Office vote. The reason for that practice was that if members were allowed such latitude on the first vote the following votes were to be allowed to go as formal. But my experience has been that, notwithstanding the latitude allowed on the first vote, hon. members have discussed the other votes of the department just the same, so that I propose to deal with each vote in its own place.

Mr. CORSER: As long as it was understood what practice was to be followed, it

would not matter to the Opposition. The Premier had already told them that this first vote included the position for the Opposition secretary, but he would obey the ruling of the Chair.

Question put and passed.

AGENT-GENERAL FOR THE STATE.

The PREMIER moved that £15,000 be granted for the "Agent-General for the State." There was a slight increase in the appropriation for the current year. Last year the expenditure was greater than the amount voted. The expenses of the Agent-General travelling from London were charged to this vote, and that had increased the expenditure as compared with the appropriation for last year. It was the desire and intention of the Government to keep the expenditure under this heading down to the amount provided on the Estimates, and the Agent-General had been instructed that he was to exercise supervision over the expenditure, and see that the amount of appropriation was not exceeded.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): He would like to ask the Premier if during his recent trip to England he had taken any action with reference to the reorganisation of the Agent-General's office, and if any action was taken to remove from the present office to an office in Australia House? The expenditure in salaries on the Agent-General's staff during last year amounted to £10,930 16s. 7d., in addition to which there was an expenditure of £824 8s. 4d. for the inspection of material, making a total expenditure of £11,805 4s. 11d. The Agent-General's staff consisted of the Agent-General, accountant, and assistant secretary, executive engineer, acting director of intelligence bureau, one inspector, three temporary clerks, three typists, a messenger, a storeman, and a switch-board attendant. He proposed to move a reduction of the vote by £2,000. Had it been the beginning of the year he would have moved a reduction of the vote by £4,000, but six months had already elapsed. The Government were now going to have, in addition to the officers he had mentioned, one chief clerk at £410 per annum, one intelligence officer at £280, and two additional inspectors at £272 each, though, as a matter of fact, the work of the Agent-General's office was being decreased. Under the agreement for the transfer of the Savings Bank business to the Commonwealth Bank, the Commonwealth were to take over certain business which was now done by the Agent-General's Department. Clause 19 of the agreement provided that—

"The Government hereby agrees and undertakes to enter into a separate agreement with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia to hand over to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia the general banking business of the State in Australia, London, and abroad, including the flotation of State loans and the payment of interest thereon, and the repayment of principle, such agreement to take effect as from the expiry of the existing arrangements with the Queensland National Bank and the Bank of England."

It was quite clear, therefore, that they were going to lose that amount of business, which meant the handling of thousands of pounds annually. When he was in London he went to the Agent-General's office in order to

find out things about Queensland, and Australia generally. He then found that Queensland was not represented at Australia House, but that the Agent-General occupied other premises in the Strand, midway between Australia House and Trafalgar Square, the rent of which ran into thousands of pounds per annum. The accountant at Australia House, London, was a particular friend of his, and he asked him why was it that Queensland had not an office in Australia House, but he could not give him the information. He hoped the Premier would inform the Committee why the Government were paying thousands of pounds rent per annum in one particular part of the Strand when they could possibly obtain an office in Australia House at a lower rental?

The PREMIER: What rent are we paying?

Mr. KERR: It was much above what they would have to pay if they had an office in Australia House.

The PREMIER: What are we paying at the present time?

Mr. KERR: He would get the figures from the Agent-General's report if the Premier particularly desired to know.

The PREMIER: I do. I want to know where we can save those thousands that you are speaking about.

Mr. KERR: A considerable amount could be saved on the staff of the Savings Bank, as this was to be dealt with by the Commonwealth. At present the deposits amounted to £12,573 19s. 4d., and withdrawals £51,391 3s. 4d.; another considerable amount could be saved in connection with the loan work, and a large saving could be made in the matter of rent. In 1919, the amount paid for rent, rates, repairs, insurance, fuel, light, etc., was £2,725 2s. 2d. He was not able to discriminate as to the expenditure for each of those items, but he was quite certain that the rent alone was over £2,000 per annum.

The PREMIER: You are quite wrong.

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentlemen would have an opportunity of giving the exact amount later on. Another vexed question was the expenditure for incidentals. The amount under that heading spent in the Agent-General's Office was £4,470 7s. 10d., and he would point out that that amount did not include the expenditure on advertising, rent, rates, repairs, etc. He would suggest to the Premier the advisability of sending an expert like the Auditor-General to London to investigate affairs in connection with the London office. On page 23 of the Auditor-General's report, he found the following paragraph:—

"In February, 1919, a motor-car (second-hand) was purchased by the Agent-General for the sum of £395. The upkeep of the car from that date to 30th June last has been £1,124 8s. 1d., an average of £70 per month, the total cost to the latter date being thus £2,619 8s. 1d."

That was an absolute shame. Then, the total amount provided for advertising in Queensland was £5,000. The amount expended in the Agent-General's office in 1919 was £362 12s. 11d. That showed that the Government were not doing their duty in regard to the advertising of the State. He thought that Kashiwagi, the Japanese shopkeeper down the Valley, with only a small shop, was better known in Queensland

Mr. Kerr.]

than the Agent-General's office in the Strand was known in Great Britain. (Laughter.) That was a very small amount to spend in advertising. On two such important items as advertising and immigration, the expenditure was only about £1,000. He would point out another direction in which the Premier might save money. The hon. gentleman attended a conference of representatives of all the State and Commonwealth Governments, in Melbourne in May and June last, when the following proposals in regard to immigration were submitted:—

"(1) The Commonwealth to have full control overseas.

"(2) The Agents-General of the several States to form a consultative committee in London.

"(3) The Commonwealth to be responsible for, and have control of, all overseas organisations and transport arrangements for bringing immigrants to Australia.

"(4) The primary object of the scheme to be the settlement of immigrants on the lands of Australia.

"(5) Preference to be given to British ex-service men. The Commonwealth to seek the co-operation and assistance of the British Government in obtaining the right type of immigrant, and finding passages.

"(6) The Commonwealth to assume financial responsibility for the organisation for immigrants from overseas and their transport to Australia."

There were two other resolutions that he would not read, and then followed two clauses that were afterwards added to those proposals—

"(1) That the Commonwealth will consult with the States from time to time as to the number of immigrants required by each State, and the type.

"(2) That the Commonwealth undertake to assist the States by way of loan for land settlement and public works schemes approved by the Commonwealth."

Under those resolutions the Commonwealth was to undertake the whole question of immigration, and loan money would be required for that. That was one of the vast questions that they had to face, and he hoped the Premier would make a statement upon the question. He was not out to ask immigrants to come to the country and pay off the public debt. The Government should take steps to put the matter on a solid and sound foundation. It had been said that Queensland was such a glorious country that it could support a population of 50,000,000. He agreed with that, provided they had the right party in power, who would look at the matter in the right way. He therefore moved that the vote be reduced by £2,000. (Laughter.)

The PREMIER: The hon. member was ill-advised to move a reduction in the vote. He had been very much interested in the hon. member's speech. The hon. member had displayed a considerable amount of intelligence in the way he had stated his case in regard to the Agent-General's office. He (Mr. Theodore) recently had an opportunity of going over that office, and of reorganising it in conjunction with the new Agent-General. Unfortunately, the Estimates did not disclose the exact position

[Mr. Kerr.

relatively, though that was no fault of the department. As the hon. member pointed out, the Estimates appeared to indicate a large accession to the staff, whereas there had really been a reduction in the staff. The Estimates last year showed only twenty-two persons on the staff; this year the personnel was stated at thirty-three. Nevertheless, there had not been an increase of eleven members of the staff, as would appear from the figures; but, on the contrary, there had been a decrease. There were thirteen or fourteen clerks in other offices previously charged to the contingency vote, and who had never been shown on the Estimates in their individual positions. That had been altered in order more fully to show the nature of the staff and the position in the Agent-General's office. When he was in London, and had an opportunity to go into the matter with the Agent-General, they concluded that the office was over-staffed, taking into account the work to be done at the present time. During the war a considerable amount of work had been done practically on behalf of the Imperial Board of Trade. At the end of the war that work disappeared. That afforded an opportunity to reduce the staff, and that had been done; and since the staff had been classified to bring it into conformity in the matter of remuneration with Queensland officers, it necessitated an increase in the expenditure on salaries. As it was thought

advisable to spend less on the [7.30 p.m.] Agent-General's office than was paid in recent years, the Agent-General has been advised to still further reduce the staff. So far as immigration was concerned, there would be no activity in the Agent-General's office for some time. That was a duty that was being undertaken by the Commonwealth. As there has been no great staff to attend to immigration for some years past, there could not be much reduction there. He pointed out to the hon. member for Enoggera that immigration was to be taken over by the Commonwealth, but the organisation, so far as the Commonwealth was concerned, was not yet in force.

Mr. KERR: You still provide £1,000 for it.

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth organisation was not in operation yet, and some money had to be provided. That money was also for expenditure from 1st July last. During the temporary stoppage of borrowing in London there would be less work at the Agent-General's office and fewer activities in regard to immigration, and it would be possible for the Agent-General to carry on with a small staff. They did not want useless expenditure going on in London when they had to exercise drastic economy in Queensland. The hon. gentleman thought that Queensland would get more benefit from removing from the Strand and occupying premises in Australia House. That was a matter that had been considered by former Premiers. It was considered by Mr. Kidston when Australia House was first mooted, and it was also considered by Mr. Denham and Mr. Ryan. One of the difficulties against the transfer from the present site to Australia House was that the Queensland Government had a lease of fourteen years for the site at 409 and 410 Strand, London. The main point which weighed with Mr. Kidston, Mr. Denham, and also Mr. Ryan was that Queensland had an excellent site in the

Strand, and the products of Queensland could be displayed more effectively in the Strand than at Australia House. The Government did not want to take a parochial attitude with regard to Australia House; but he thought that the site occupied by Queensland at present was a better one than Australia House could be. It was the same with Western Australia, which also occupied a good site in the Strand. If Queensland had to show her wares in London, they must have a good site to do it.

Mr. KERR: Thousands more go to Australia House.

The PREMIER: No. The business and commercial men went to Australia House, but Queensland had a far superior site in the Strand—much better than they would have in Australia House. If the policy of advertising Australia in the future was to be unification, and if all the States were to occupy Australia House, Queensland would have to conform to it the same as the other States; but while they were carrying on as at present, he thought it better to have the best location possible. Thousands of people pass the Queensland Agency in the Strand every day, and there was always a crowd outside, because the products grown in Queensland were an attraction to them. The present Agent-General was interested in his work, and he always had a good display of Queensland products, and in that way they were shown to hundreds of thousands of people who passed along the Strand every week.

Mr. ELPINSTONE: It does not seem to bring them out here.

The PREMIER: It was no use bringing people out until they could absorb them. Until they were prepared to spend loan money on public works and open up lands for settlement, it was no use bringing people out here. Once they started on a policy of immigration they could absorb thousands of immigrants from the United Kingdom. Numerous inquiries were made at the Agent-General's office, and also in Brisbane, by a desirable class of immigrants who wished to come to Queensland. The immigration policy, however, was in a state of suspension at present, and no one would say it was a wise policy to pursue at present, owing to the uncertainty of starting loan works and opening up lands, and in view of the fact that it would create a lot of unemployed.

The Hon. W. H. BARNES: You have the remedy in your own hands.

The PREMIER: He did not think he had. The Government had been obstructed owing to the action in England of several unpatriotic citizens from Queensland. (Opposition dissent.) He recognised what the hon. member for Enoggera had said in regard to the necessity of keeping a close hand on the Agent-General's office. They would be quite willing to work with the Commonwealth later on, but at present he thought it better for Queensland to occupy the present location, as it was better than Australia House for advertising Queensland.

Mr. KERR: Will you see that only Queenslanders are employed there?

The PREMIER: That was a good suggestion of the hon. member.

Mr. MORGAN: The Premier said that immigration was being interfered with owing to the action of certain gentlemen in

England; but it was the legislation of the Queensland Government which prevented people from coming here. He drew attention to what he considered to be almost a public scandal, and that was the expense incurred in connection with the appointment of the Agent-General and his removal to England. The figures shown in the Auditor-General's report would convince anyone that the money spent in connection with his transfer to England was a wilful waste of public money on the part of the Government. It said in the Auditor-General's report, in connection with the expenses connected with the new Agent-General's appointment—

“Parliamentary Refreshment-rooms—
Banquet, band, etc., £121 15s.”

There was no necessity for the Government to spend that much money on a banquet to the Agent-General, seeing that there were people in the State on the verge of starvation. One banquet was not sufficient, it appeared, because another banquet was held at the Exhibition Hall, for which £97 10s. was paid for catering and £49 4s. was paid for band, rent of hall, and sundries. They were items that should not be incurred by any Government with any self-respect. They found that £153 7s. 3d. was spent on “bags, insurance, and sundries.” Surely to goodness, if an ordinary individual went to employment in Great Britain, he would not expect the firm employing him to find him in bags! He would find his own bags. Who owned the bags now? Were they the property of the Queensland Government?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. MORGAN: Could the hon. member for Bowen, for instance, justify the expenditure of £2,413 for sending an Agent-General to England, either to his electors or to those men who were to be seen in every park resting all day, owing to the fact that there was no work for them? Not one member on the Government side rose in his place and lodged an objection to such wilful waste. It amounted to almost a public scandal, and an inquiry should be held to see whether the expenditure was justified. Under the heading of “Travelling Expenses” was an item of £53 for visiting Roma and Canungra—sending the Agent-General up to his own district for the purpose of saying good-bye to his own electors. Under the same head there was £15 6s. 1d. for railway expenses. He thought he could travel on the railway as far as Roma and railway refreshments would not cost him as much as half a sovereign at the most, and he would want a friend to help him spend that. Then it was necessary to charter a special train, costing £22 6s. 10d., to cart the Agent-General about. When it was desired to bring children and some of their mothers from bush selections so that they might have a holiday or an opportunity of seeing the sea once in a while, the Railway Department required a guarantee and the payment of a very large sum. Then the fares to England cost £653 7s. 6d., and advances £923 1s. 10d. He would like to know what those advances were? Were they going to be repaid out of salary? The whole matter called for explanation, and if the present amendment were withdrawn or a vote were not taken on it, he would move a reduction so that they could have a division and let the people see just who justified such expenditure and who protested against it.

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. CORSER: Although Mr. Hunter's absence was cheap at any price, he took exception to the Government's extravagance. He found in the Auditor-General's report that in 1919 a motor-car was purchased for the use of the Agent-General.

The TREASURER: That is sold.

Mr. CORSER: They were dealing with the report, and if the Auditor-General had made a mistake it was up to the Premier to correct it at the proper time. That car cost £895, second hand, and it was not an American car bought in Australia with a heavy exchange rate added to it. The upkeep for eighteen months cost the State £1,124 8s. 1d.

The TREASURER: Well, that is gone—(laughter)—with the car.

Mr. CORSER: The total cost was £2,019. This was a Government that were out to economise—that told their servants they must dispense with them because they could not get money from the other side of the world!

The PREMIER: It is sold.

Mr. CORSER: And they were going to sell the "Lucinda" and a lot of other things in order to try to rake up a little money in the recess, practically putting them in pawn! That was not the only expenditure to which they must object, however. There was the £2,413 spent in getting the Agent-General over there—cheap at any price, he admitted—but still they had to pay for it.

The PREMIER: Then why growl?

Mr. CORSER: One could not help growling when one saw men in the streets of Brisbane looking for a crust, running round the departments trying to get an interview with the Premier or a Minister, who evaporated—(laughter)—so that they could not see them. Just fancy £2,400 to send Mr. Hunter to London! That said nothing of the £3,700 that the Premier spent in going there.

The PREMIER: It did not cost me that to go there.

Mr. CORSER: According to the Auditor-General's report, that was the expenditure on the trip. He found that on the voyage to England, Mr. Hunter received advances totalling £923, which was in addition to the £623 for fares to England. He would like to know from the Premier just what those advances were? The amount of £121 for a banquet must stagger everyone in the city who was looking for a job. Then there was a large amount for catering at the Exhibition, to say nothing of the various special trains and other things that had to be found, and the Opposition could not help but voice their disapproval at the ruthless expenditure in connection with the Agent-General.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): Some few weeks ago he had asked the Premier if he would give particulars of the £13,816 that appeared in the Imperial meat account on 30th June, 1920.

The PREMIER: That comes under Trust and Special Funds.

Mr. FLETCHER: Had he the assurance of the Premier that he could deal with the matter later on.

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): He understood that the Agent-General was chiefly appointed to advertise the State of Queensland in order to attract suitable immigrants. During the debate the Premier had definitely stated that

[*Mr. Corser.*

the Government had no intention at the present time to go in for a comprehensive policy of immigration, as, owing to the financial position, it was impossible to open up this great State and make it suitable for immigrants. If the Government administered its funds properly, and did away with a lot of the wasteful expenditure that had been made manifest by the discussion on the Estimates, they would be able to develop the State and make it attractive. It was only by increasing the population that they could hope to reduce the heavy burden of taxation which had been brought about by the admiral-tration of the Government. The policy announced by the Premier was quite different to that laid down by the Premier during the recent election campaign. When speaking at Townsville, the Premier said—

"Land settlement was urgently needed.

They had to make provision for filling up the State with a large population. They recognised in North Queensland the necessity of having a large population. In Queensland they had 700,000 square miles, with a population not greater than that of the city of Birmingham."

Yet, the Premier now said that the Government, during the coming year, was not going to adopt a bold and vigorous immigration policy, by which they might develop the State.

The PREMIER: We cannot adopt a bold policy of immigration until we solve the financial problem.

Mr. GREEN: The financial problem would be solved if they had additional population. If the Agent-General was not going to act as an advertising medium in order to attract immigrants to Queensland, then they should abolish the office altogether. Under those circumstances, he would support the amendment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would like to give the Premier a little bit of advice on the matter of immigration. It was no use bringing a lot of people here and putting them on the land to grow produce that was to be placed on the markets of Brisbane, where there was no demand for it. Such a policy would mean impoverishing those people already on the land. (Government laughter.) It was all very well for city members, who never produced anything, to laugh, but the fact remained that every trade was fenced round with union rules which prohibited men from joining the union, and prohibited any surplus goods being made. There was only one way to make immigration successful, and that was to start manufacturing their own goods, and create a demand for the produce grown. Otherwise, they must grow produce which could be exported. He protested against the expenses of the Agent-General before he left Queensland.

Mr. FLETCHER: Referring again to the £13,816, which the Premier had told us was made up of about £10,000 legal fees and £3,000 odd expenses and fees for Mr. Ryan's visit to London, all in connection with the Mooraberrie case. The Mooraberrie case arose by reason of the fact that the Government placed an embargo on the owner of Mooraberrie, preventing her from moving her cattle over the border.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I cannot see in what way the Mooraberrie case is connected with this vote.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Agent-General was the agent between this Government and the Imperial Government, and the Chief Secretary's Department handled the Imperial meat agreement. The owner of Mooraberrie objected to what she considered was an infringement of her rights, and sued the Government. The case was taken through all the courts of Australia right up to the Privy Council in England. The Government, in defending the suit, built up these legal expenses and fees. The matter had nothing to do with the Imperial Government. The embargo was imposed to keep cattle in Queensland for State supplies, owing to the drought at that time making a dearth of fats. The charge should have been borne by Queensland. A great deal of the business was merely theatrical display on the part of Mr. Ryan to show his legal knowledge in connection with such matters. He considered the Queensland Government, as agent for the Imperial Government, should have looked after the Imperial Government's interests as if they were their own, and should have dealt with them fairly, justly, and equitably right through. From his knowledge of the meat business he thought it was an unfair charge against the Imperial Government. It was on all-fours with the £19,000 which was collected from the Commonwealth Government three years ago. There was an account called "The Embargo Fund Account," which had a credit balance to-day of £39,360. This amount of £13,000 could have been placed against that with more justice than by charging it to the Imperial Government. He hoped the Premier would see the action taken was wrong and would correct it at the first opportunity.

Mr. BRENNAN thought a Government member should reply to the hon. member for Port Curtis, who had stated that the Mooraberrie case was really a lawyers' case for the benefit of Mr. Ryan. That hon. member knew very well that had the Queensland Government allowed the big cattle-owners to move their stock across the border very little beef would have reached the Imperial authorities. No matter what it cost the Imperial authorities to fight their case and preserve their rights, they got a very good deal from the Queensland Government. Had the great beef barons of Queensland had their way they would have charged three times the price of that beef which went to the Imperial Government. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He thought it was quite right that they should call attention to one or two paragraphs in the Immigration Agent's report for the year 1919. That gentleman reported as follows:—

"I would point out that some inconvenience has been experienced by these oversea settlement passengers owing to the fact that the knowledge of their expected arrival does not reach Queensland until within, at the outside, a week or two of their actual landing."

That was not exactly an encouraging state of affairs to meet new arrivals in this country, and it seemed to him to be rather a serious reflection on the Agent-General's Department in London. The report went on to say—

"It would probably be advantageous to these people, and possible employers, if we were able to widely publish in the Press full information concerning them, at least a month before they were due."

That is a very sensible suggestion. He hoped that no matter in whose hands this question of immigration would ultimately rest, something of that nature would be adopted; because it was quite useless encouraging people to leave their homes in Great Britain and come out to such a distant country as this, without giving them some opportunity of finding a home upon their arrival here. First impressions went a very long way when entering a new country. Speaking quite feelingly he could say the first duty which devolved upon them was to see that these newcomers were given every encouragement and assistance when they came within the boundaries of Queensland. Another point he referred to was this—

"Another drawback has been the absence of any official representatives of the Oversea Settlement people in any State in Australia. Passengers destined for Queensland have come by ships terminating the voyage at Sydney, while amongst those whose tickets carried them to Brisbane were people whose actual destinations were in various parts of North Queensland, at points a considerable distance from the nearest seaport."

They could well conceive that the average Britisher had no idea of the great extent of territory which was embraced in the Commonwealth, and if he took a ticket for Sydney or Brisbane, as the case might be, he might think he was near his destination, but, as was well known, he would have to take on almost a second voyage to arrive where he ultimately hoped to make his home. He had to make an interesting comment upon the general question of immigration as applied to Australia. It appeared that some few months ago Mr. Clemenson, one of the trade union officials in Australia, wrote to Mr. Appleton, who was then the president of the International Federation of Trade Unions, protesting against the immigration of Britishers to the Commonwealth, and in particular to Western Australia. Mr. Clemenson had written to Mr. Appleton drawing a most gloomy picture of the position in Western Australia, and expressed a hope that Mr. Appleton would warn British workers. The Premier a few moments ago said that this was not the time to talk about immigration to this country, as if it was the country's fault that we could not encourage immigration from Great Britain. The fault was simply the damnable management under which this country had been labouring for five years past. Therefore the same arguments which were advanced by this gentleman in Western Australia, it could be said with every degree of truth, were the arguments which had been advanced even in the debate to-night. He looked upon Mr. Appleton's reply as being very true, and it was a thousand pities that they had not men on the Labour benches here of the particular conception of thought and Imperial ideas as appeared to be possessed by Mr. Appleton. This was what Mr. Appleton said—

"The picture you paint suggests extraordinary incapacity somewhere. You have a land where the sun shines always. You have soil which will produce anything which the heart of man desires. You have minerals at least for the needs of a population of 50,000,000. You are always crying out for a 'white man's Australia,' and yet you seek to dissuade white men from coming to

Mr. Elphinstone.]

Australia. If we are to carry out your wishes, and bend all our tension towards persuading our surplus population to emigrate to the United States, or to the Argentine, it does seem that the possibility of Asiatic control of Australia is increased. I think you ought to know also that thousands of Australians who have been over here the last few years do not speak so despondently of their country as you do. They have been the best emigration agents Australia has ever had. Comparing their statements with yours, I am compelled to wonder whether these men were not utterly ignorant of the conditions in their country. At the moment, it is difficult for a man on this side of the world to judge properly of the situations existing under the Southern Cross. It is possible that Australia, like other countries, is suffering from the loss of brave and skilled men who were killed in the war, and that it is not less labour but more labour that Australia requires to develop her undoubted resources."

There were the utterances of a statesman and a man whom hon. gentlemen opposite ought to follow, because he was a broad-minded Labour man. Instead of the Premier wishing to throw the onus on some poor little delegation which went from this country in a matter of deceiving Queensland, here was the real root of the trouble as expressed by Mr. Appleton. The Premier here was propounding the policy that Queensland with one man per square mile was not in a position to encourage immigration from Great Britain: and why?

At fifteen minutes past 8 o'clock p.m.

Mr. KIRWAN relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (continuing): Could they have a greater condemnation than the criticism so aptly expressed by Mr. Appleton? He left it with the Chamber to consider and compare that argument with the futile, puny, weak, childish utterance which the Premier perpetually trotted out, trying to draw the minds of the people of Queensland from the real cause of the depression at the present moment.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. COLLINS: He was very interested in the Agent-General's report, in which there was a paragraph dealing with the flotation of the £2,000,000 loan. He had listened very attentively to the hon. member for Oxley, who usually sought to lecture hon. members on the Government side. As the Premier pointed out, if they had got the loan money asked for they would have been able to develop the Upper Burnett lands, absorb our unemployed, and also make room for people who desired to come here from overseas. The reason they did not raise the money was owing to the unpatriotic attitude of the financiers of Great Britain, who preferred the foreigner to their own kith and kin. (Opposition dissent.) Hon. members opposite need not interject, because he was going to prove his case from the "Daily Mail" year book for 1920, which contained a statement of the money lent to the various allied countries during the war. During the war, Great Britain lent to Russia £568,000,000; to France, £434,000,000; to Italy, £412,000,000; to Belgium, £86,000,000; to Serbia, £18,000,000; and to other allies, £47,000,000; or a total of £1,565,000,000, to people who did not speak the same language as we did. Queensland asked for £9,000,000

[Mr. Elphinstone.

—they asked for bread, and they were given a stone. One hon. member said that the trouble was owing to the damnable legislation of the Government. He (Mr. Collins) said that it was nothing of the kind, and that the financiers of Great Britain ought to be ashamed of themselves for having refused to lend money to Queensland, which sent 50,000 of its young men to fight the battles of the old land. The delegation ought also to be ashamed of themselves for assisting the financiers of Great Britain to turn Queensland down. They asked for £9,000,000, and yet the countries he had just mentioned were granted £1,565,000,000.

The men who went from this country to fight in the great war did not ask what Government was in power during the war. Surely, the people of Queensland should come before Italians, Frenchmen, and Belgians, as Belgium only lost 13,000 men during the war! Yet Belgium got £86,000,000 from Great Britain to assist them. They would have been under no compulsion to Great Britain had they asked, not for £9,000,000, but for £19,000,000 or £20,000,000. Hon. members opposite were quite welcome with their unpatriotic colleagues across the water. Queensland was denied money which ought readily to have been granted to her as a child of the mother country. The hon. member for Oxley put all the blame on the Government, instead of putting it on the proper shoulders.

HON. W. H. BARNES: According to the statement of the hon. member who had just spoken, all other countries which went to Great Britain could get money. That, surely, was a reflection on Queensland, and especially on the Premier who was armed with all the necessary credentials to obtain money from British financiers. It was the putrid Government which was entirely responsible for the failure of that loan.

THE PREMIER: The people did not say so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The people did say so. The Premier had to admit that he had signally failed in his efforts to float a loan, and that was the first time that the Premier of a great State was placed in that position.

THE PREMIER: Through the disloyalty of the delegation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; through the disloyalty of the Government. The Premier and his colleagues had stated that certain men, who had practically lost their standing in the political world, went home and were successful in defeating the Premier. That fact very largely contributed to the vote which went against the Government at the last election. The Premier wanted to undo the legislation which was objected to, but his colleagues would not allow him to do it.

THE PREMIER: Who said that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was repeatedly rumoured that that was the position. (Government laughter.) In that evening's paper there were references made to loans, and South Australia and Tasmania were mentioned.

THE PREMIER: They sent no delegation to London.

HON. W. H. BARNES: And they had no legislation of a repudiatory character—they had not done that which was dishonourable. The Premier knew why he had not got the loan.

THE PREMIER: Because of the "stinking fish" delegation you sent home.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, it was not because of the delegation sent home. The hon. gentleman knew that the Government of Queensland had so dragged their officers into the dirt that there was no State held in such disfavour in the old country.

The PREMIER: Didn't you repudiate the delegation yourself?

[8.30 p.m.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. He said that, as far as he was concerned, he had nothing whatever to do with the delegation, but he also said that the members of the delegation were men of whom any city or country might be proud. He wanted to ask the Premier to rise to the larger question so far as it concerned Queensland. When they were discussing finance more fully a while ago, he (Mr. Barnes) said that there was only one way by which the State could put itself right and develop its resources.

The PREMIER: That is not by sending a delegation home.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He did not say it was; but did the hon. gentleman not realise that there was a responsibility resting upon him to do the straight and the proper thing, and that when that was done Queensland would emerge from the cloud by which it was at present obscured? The Government should do the honest and the honourable thing, just as private individuals would have to do. The Government were getting certain moneys as a result of certain legislation, but, on the other hand, they were driving away people from this great State, and they were preventing the development of the State. That was the reason why the hon. gentleman was not able to get the immigrants who were willing to come from the old country. The question of immigration was of vital importance to a country like Queensland, which had only a handful of people. It was a duty devolving upon everyone in Queensland to do their part to develop their great State. But what had the Government done? Echo answered "What?" They had done everything possible to destroy the country. In the report of the Agent-General certain references were made to the retirement of the late Agent-General, Sir Thomas Robinson. Sir Thomas Robinson was a man who had done magnificent service for Queensland; he was a man who had done magnificent service to the Empire in a time of crisis, because he had to do with the meat supplies for many of the countries that were engaged in the great war. It was their duty to bear testimony to the services rendered by Sir Thomas Robinson in that regard. Mr. Hunter in his report said—

"At the beginning of the year we had about 750 nominated persons on hand awaiting passages. Of this number, 46 were either the wives or fiancées of Australian soldiers, and as such were eligible for a free passage under the Commonwealth military repatriation and demobilisation scheme. Passages for these people were, therefore, arranged in army transports, the cost being defrayed by the Commonwealth military authorities."

But what was the position with regard to some of the men who had come to the State? He held that it was the duty of the Government to make provision for people whom they brought to the country; but many

of those who had come to Queensland were scrapped upon the streets of Brisbane. He would not say who was to blame for that, but men who had fought for their country found, when they came to Queensland, that no provision was made for them, and the Government had to send them back again. He rose particularly to plead with the Government to do the right thing so far as the State was concerned.

The PREMIER: Do you want us to give back the rent paid by the pastoral lessees?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not saying that. The hon. gentleman had passed certain legislation, and that legislation ought to be dealt with, and anything of a repudiatory nature should be removed from the statute-book.

The PREMIER: Do you want to make the farmers pay three times their present rent in order that the pastoral lessees may pay less?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was useless for the hon. gentleman to pretend to show consideration for the farmers, because he had been applying the screw to the farmers on every possible occasion. He would just refer the hon. gentleman to the fares and freights that the farmers had to pay.

The PREMIER: Why do you avoid the issue?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not avoiding the issue.

The PREMIER: Do you contend that the pastoral lessees should not be compelled to pay the rent they ought to pay to the Crown?

HON. W. H. BARNES: As a result of the passage of that legislation, many people who would have come otherwise would not come to Queensland, because they held that a Government that was guilty of repudiation in one direction might be guilty of repudiation in some other direction. Why was it that there were so many people walking the streets of Brisbane in search of employment? It was because right down at bedrock people were afraid to trust the Government. The whole policy of the Government had been to put the country in the mire. When they were dealing with a vote like that it was the duty of hon. members to point out those things and appeal to the hon. gentleman to do the right thing, the straight thing, the honourable thing, in order to put their country into the position that she should be in and would be in if the hon. gentleman would only do his duty.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: He would not allow the hon. gentleman's tub-thumping to go unanswered. On two or three occasions during the session the hon. gentleman had referred to some alleged repudiation on the part of the Government to which he attributed the failure to get a loan in London. He (Mr. Theodore) would briefly review the facts. First of all, the Government had not been guilty of repudiation in connection with their legislation. The hon. member constantly asserted that they had been guilty of repudiation, and the other day he quoted senselessly from certain statutes—Constitution Acts or some other Acts—in a futile endeavour to prove that the Government had evaded some of their legal obligations. But the hon. gentleman's own reading of those Acts showed him that there was no obligation, and he suddenly dropped that line of argument.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I did not.

Mr. C. P. BARNES: It showed that other people were more honourable than you.

The PREMIER: He would deal with that question. He would ask the hon. gentleman what contract, or agreement, or undertaking the Government had broken in connection with the pastoralists?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The agreement that was made with the pastoralists at a certain period.

The PREMIER: Made between whom? The Government of the day?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: We know it was made by a previous Government.

The PREMIER: Between a previous Government and the pastoralists? When he was in London, he met representatives of the pastoral companies, and he challenged them to produce any such agreement.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And you were not successful in your challenge.

The PREMIER: Well, he challenged the hon. gentleman to produce any agreement that the Government had violated—any copy of any such agreement.

Mr. C. P. BARNES: What did your amendment of the legislation do?

The PREMIER: Their legislation was an amendment of the Land Act of 1910, but it did not break any agreement. The matter was one that ought to be thrashed out, because there was much misunderstanding on the other side about it. He challenged the representatives of the pastoral companies in London—who had the same misconception as to what was involved in that legislation—to show where the Government had altered the conditions of their leases. He told them that if any gentleman could produce a copy of a lease, or an instrument of lease, which set out any terms of restriction of the rentals to 50 per cent. on the rent for the preceding term, he would be in favour of cancelling the legislation. When that challenge was issued, a number of the members of the deputation were honest enough to confess that they believed all the time that the limitation of 50 per cent. was mentioned in the leases. Mr. Andrew Williamson, who was a very astute-minded man, saw they were floundering in great difficulties! He said it was not so much an alteration of the lease as an undertaking that was given by the Government. He (Mr. Theodore) said, "Produce the undertaking." He asked them to produce the undertaking which was made by the Government, because, if there was an undertaking, it must be in writing.

Mr. MORGAN: It is in the Act.

The PREMIER: That was precisely the answer which Mr. Williamson made. They said that perhaps there was no lease, no undertaking, or no agreement; but, at any rate, it was in the Act of 1905. There was no agreement, no contract, written or oral, and there was no undertaking. It was a voluntary Act of the Queensland Parliament, not as the result of any agreement or undertaking at all.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting.

The PREMIER: If members opposite would let him go on, he would show that it was merely a voluntary Act of the Queensland Parliament. Parliament voluntarily made a concession to the pastoralists of

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

Queensland; and, if Parliament could make a concession, Parliament also had the right to amend that concession. Did anyone say that because Parliament made a voluntary concession to anyone it could never afterwards vary that concession? He could further state that that Act stipulated that a lease should be issued to the pastoral lessees in connection with pastoral holdings subject to that Act, or any subsequent amendment of the Act. In amending the Act fifteen years afterwards—after the pastoralists had enjoyed the concession for fifteen years—could anyone seriously say that the Government violated an agreement, or broke an agreement, or departed from a statutory undertaking by introducing an amendment of the Act?

Mr. CORSER: Yes, of course, you did.

The PREMIER: The hon. member might say so, but he could not prove it. The hon. member only said it just for the sake of tub-thumping, and for the sake of criticism. He thought it better to refer to this matter fully, because there had been so much misrepresentation of the attitude of the Labour party in this connection. The Labour party did not amend the Act in a spirit of vengeance against the pastoralists, but it had been part of their policy for fifteen years past. That legislation found a place in the Labour platform for fifteen years. It was the plank known as "The Equalisation of Pastoralists and Selector's Rents." It was because they considered it was an intolerable anomaly that the grazing farmer should have to pay three times as much rent as the squatter for the same class of country that the Labour party took action in the matter. That was the reason why the Kidston Administration introduced into the Assembly the very principle which the Labour party eventually passed in 1920. The Kidston Administration introduced it in 1910. It was introduced by Mr. Denham, after having been passed by the Cabinet of which the Hon. W. H. Barnes, the hon. member for Bulimba, was a member.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The PREMIER: If the Act passed by the Labour Government was so grossly unjust, and did such an intolerable injustice to a large body of citizens—if it were such an Act as to cause disruption in London so far as their financial arrangements were concerned, and was sufficient to hold up the name of Queensland to ignominy, why was it introduced by Mr. Denham in the Kidston Government, of which the hon. member for Bulimba was a member?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I succeeded in getting it taken out.

The PREMIER: It was taken out of the Bill introduced by the hon. member's Government because the pastoralists objected to it. The pastoralists threatened the Kidston Government with extinction if they persisted in introducing that legislation. (Hear, hear!) The fact remained that that Bill in 1910 went through the Cabinet, of which the hon. member for Bulimba was a member, and it was introduced in the House as a Government measure. Mr. Denham went to great pains to explain the measure, and he did so clearly and logically. Mr. Denham very reluctantly withdrew the provision subsequently.

Mr. FERRICKS: That Bill passed its second reading in 1910.

The PREMIER: What kind of reliance could they place on the character of a man like the hon. member for Bulimba, who was opposing the Government and attributing to the Government all kinds of blame for the failure to raise loan money in London, and charging the Government with being responsible for bringing ruin to the State, when his own Government in 1910—with the hon. gentlemen sitting at the same table in the Cabinet—agreed to exactly the same principle.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I succeeded in getting it knocked out.

The PREMIER: The Labour party were inspired by one desire in regard to that measure, and that was to do justice to the grazing farmers and the community, as between the grazing farmers, the community, and the pastoralists. (Hear, hear!) The pastoralists occupied something like 200,000,000 acres of the best grazing land in Queensland, and their average rental was one-third that paid by grazing farmers for the same class of country. All the advantage of tenure was in favour of the pastoral lessee, and not in favour of the grazing farmer, who had to reside on his land. The Land Court frequently called attention to the anomaly, whereby the grazing farmer had to pay a certain rent, while his large neighbour occupied his land at one-third the rental. It was a well-known fact that up to this year the pastoral lessee paid only 16s. 9d. per square mile for his land, while the grazing farmer paid on an average 59s. per square mile for the same class of country. Was not that an anomaly that ought to be amended. (Hear, hear!) All that the Queensland Government did was to amend that anomaly. There was no repudiation. There was no broken agreement or broken contract. The whole thing was a voluntary concession made by the Queensland Parliament, and all that the Queensland Government did was to modify that concession.

Mr. CORSER: You altered the conditions under which they took up their leases.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman, as a farmers' representative, was very foolish to take up the cudgels for the pastoralists.

Mr. CORSER: We do the honourable thing for everybody.

The PREMIER: It was not honourable for the hon. gentleman to advocate that the squatters should get their land at one-third the rent of the grazing farmers. There was nothing honourable in that. The hon. member for Burnett said the conditions under which the leases were taken up were altered. That was untrue, because the pastoralists took up their leases three years before the concession was made to them. The hon. member for Warwick interjected very decidedly a moment ago that the Government should not interfere with vested interests in the way they did. It was true that it might be called an interference with vested interests, but there was no breach of contract, or breach of agreement, or a limitation of the rights of private lessees. (Hear, hear!) It was by no means the first time that action of that kind was taken by the Queensland Parliament. The hon. member for Bulimba himself passed a Bill called the Rights in Water and Water Conservation Act of 1910.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are pretty hard up for an illustration.

The PREMIER: The hon. gentleman felt very uncomfortable, but the fact remained that the hon. member for Bulimba introduced, for the first time in any British community, a Bill which provided that the rights in water should vest in the Crown. When he was in England he discussed that Bill with a number of pastoralists, and he also mentioned a number of abnormalities committed by the hon. member for Bulimba when he was a member of the Government. (Government laughter.) However, the Labour party were not so unpatriotic as to send a delegation to London protesting against that measure. (Laughter.) Under that Bill a man owning the freehold had no right to the water passing over his land. In England, when a man owned the freehold, he also owned the water upon the land. He held the riparian rights, and owned the streams running through his land, and he could prevent anyone from fishing in the streams or interfering with the banks in any way. That was the Act passed by the hon. member for Bulimba in 1910, which took those rights away from the freeholder without compensation.

Mr. CORSER: Supported by what party?

The PREMIER: Supported by the Labour party because they believed it to be a fair thing. But that was not the point. There was dispossession there. The hon. member, under that Act, expropriated the rights of private owners, without compensation. Take another case—The Mining on Private Lands Act, passed by the Kidston Government in which the hon. member for Bulimba was Minister for Works. That Act gave the right to the Mines Department to issue licenses to miners to go on to freehold land, sink shafts, and mine for minerals which the owners of the freehold previously thought belonged to them and had been granted to them by the Crown. What happened in 1906? Only four years after this concession had been made to the pastoralists—after only one year, in fact—the Kidston Government, or the Morgan-Kidston regime, introduced a Bill affecting those very pastoral leases by throwing new obligations on the lessees regarding the eradication of prickly-pear. The House agreed to it, and the penalty for default in certain circumstances was forfeiture of the lease. That inserted a new condition in the leases, without any compensation or any suggestion or repudiation. The lessees who took up land under the 1905 Act, or the 1902 Act, consequently found themselves with new conditions on their shoulders, imposed by the Kidston regime, which he thought was supported by the hon. member for Bulimba.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Go very carefully.

Now.

The PREMIER: Perhaps the hon. member at that time was not supporting them; but, at any rate, he did not protest against the passage of that Bill. He mentioned those facts to the pastoralists' representatives when he met them in conference in London, and they were considerably astonished, and said: "Good God, what kind of Governments have you had out there?" (Laughter.) He told them that those Governments were not all Labour Governments, that some of them represented men who were responsible for sending the delegation to England.

Mr. SIZER: You could not have said that.

The PREMIER: He did, indeed. Why should he not? "At any rate," they said, "You will find no such instance of repudiatory

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

legislation of that character in England." As it happened, he had an example. He had the full particulars in his attache case in the House that night, and it was very interesting. The editor of a financial newspaper in the city of London, who knew how Queensland was being maligned and how the Queensland Government were being attacked, brought the facts before his notice out of sympathy. It appeared that a hundred years ago the Government gave a concession to certain companies whose buildings fronted what was known as the Victoria Embankment in London, to the effect that they should have granted to them certain additions to the frontages to the river Thames if they reclaimed the land, and, as a quid pro quo, they were to have complete immunity from all rates, taxes, and assessments whatever for all time. They possessed that concession for a hundred years, and then the London City Council assessed some of those buildings for a sanitary rate, considering that if the properties were free of the ordinary rates and taxes they should, at any rate, pay a rate imposed for a service rendered. The companies contested the right to tax the lands, and the Privy Council eventually upheld them, holding that the lands were absolutely inviolable so far as those taxes were concerned.

Mr. SIZER: Freehold taxes?

The PREMIER: All taxes, rates, and assessments whatsoever. The city of London went to the Government and had a Bill drafted over-riding the decision of the Privy Council and had it introduced and passed by the House of Lords, and it was being considered by the House of Commons when he was meeting the pastoralists in London.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Did the Lords do that?

The PREMIER: Yes. When he mentioned that instance of gross repudiation without compensation, that had happened right at the heart of the Empire, Mr. Williamson, the sponsor for the pastoralists said, "Well, that must have been an oversight. At any rate, I will guarantee it does not pass the House of Commons." But it did pass the Commons, in July last, and was now law—over-riding rights granted by legislation one hundred years ago and upheld by the Privy Council, and over-riding those rights at the instance of the city of London authority, and with the approval of the Imperial Government themselves. What was the use of hon. members pretending that the present Government was a Bolshevistic Government, trying to over-ride all authority? All they were desirous of doing was to give a fair deal to the community, and if the pastoralists were getting their land at only one-third of the rent the farmers were paying, then if they could do it without breach of contract or agreement, they ought to make them pay. That was what they were doing.

Mr. CORSER: Reduce the rent of the farmers. They are paying too much.

The PREMIER: That was simply begging the question, merely evidencing a desire to evade the main point. (Hear, hear!) It would be a good thing to reduce the rent of the farmers if they were paying too much, but who assessed the rents of the farmers? A judicial tribunal, a Land Court. They must take it that the court had fixed the rents on a fair and bonâ fide basis, and if the farmers paid a fair rent, why should the

pastoralists not pay a similar rent for the same class of country in the same district? If hon. members could produce an instrument of lease which contained a specific condition that the rent was not to be raised above 50 per cent. at any reappraisalment, they would stand on a much solidier basis than that on which they stood now. Expecting this debate, he happened to have in his bag an exact example of a lease of a pastoral holding under the 1902 Act, one of the original leases—so that it could not be said it had been altered since—and the leases under the 1910 Act were in similar form, with the necessary alterations as to date. He defied any one to find in it any reference to a limitation of rent.

Mr. CORSER: Not necessary—it is in the Act.

The PREMIER: It did not fall within the contract; what the pastoralists had enjoyed had been a concession. That was established by the Act, in which occurred the words themselves, "Subject to amendment." The matter had been thrashed out on many occasions, and it was very unfortunate for Queensland that charges of vindictiveness against the pastoralists had been laid against the Government, or charges which implied that the Government dishonoured contracts or agreements. No such charge could be upheld, and—although he could not pretend to speak with any legal authority on the subject—he had no doubt that if there were in force any legal contract, the men who alleged they were injured would have recourse to law.

Mr. BRENNAN: Under the Claims against the Government Act.

The PREMIER: He thought they would. The fact was that, arguing from any point they liked to take, the Government had treated the pastoralists in a way about which complaint could not be made, in order to cure the gross anomaly that existed as between the farmers and the pastoralists, and such charges of repudiation only tended to do more damage to the State, and it was most unfortunate, indeed, that two or three of the "squatter" representatives should go to London and besmirch the fair name of Queensland, attack the honesty of the Government, and charge all kinds of acts against the Government, slander the people of the State, and thus prevent his Administration from getting money in London. (Government cheers.)

[9 p.m.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: He had a quotation from the "Financial Times" of 26th August, 1920, which read as follows:—

"QUEENSLAND'S LAND CONTRACTS.

"REASON FOR FAILURE OF LOAN NEGOTIATIONS.

"To the Editor of 'The Times.'

"Sir,—The cabled report of the speech of the Lieutenant-Governor of Queensland on the opening of the Queensland Parliament gives so misleading an explanation of the failure of the Premier, Mr. Theodore, to raise a loan here recently that my committee have felt constrained to make public the following statement. Every protest having failed to induce the Government to either abandon or defer the passing of the Land Act Amendment Bill of 1920, known all over Australia as the Repudiation Bill, because of the breach of faith

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.

with pastoral lessees which it perpetrates, the Bill was forced through Parliament at the beginning of this year through the packing of the Upper House with new members by the Ministry with the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor.

"My committee, just prior to the arrival here of the Premier, wrote to the Agent-General for Queensland, asking him to arrange for a deputation meeting Mr. Theodore as soon as possible after his arrival. In accordance with this request, a meeting took place on 31st May, and various subsequent meetings were held at Mr. Theodore's request, when the whole matter was very fully discussed. At these conferences it was again pointed out to Mr. Theodore that the Act in question violates the contractual obligations of the State by removing, through the arbitrary use of sovereign power, a vital provision in the pastoral leases, not only without the consent, but in spite of the strong protests of the lessees.

"It was also pointed out to the Premier that this violation of contract had been deliberately forced through by the present Government of Queensland after repeated attempts extending over a period of some five years, during which time, not in Queensland only, but in the Press of this country, the inevitable resulting damage to the credit of the State has over and over again been publicly urged upon them.

"The damning fact is that the Queensland Government claims to alter to their own advantage a contract to which they are parties against the will of the other contracting parties, who are injured by such alteration. It is repudiation, pure and simple.

"There was no suggestion of interfering with the self-governing powers of Queensland or of any other State within the British Empire. It was, however, made very clear to the Premier that breach of faith is ruinous to the credit of Governments as well as of individuals, and that the one sure road to restoration of credit was to undo the wrong by repealing the Act and restoring the status quo ante.

"Mr. Theodore, the Premier, after cabled communication with his Government, offered to repeal the Act, but coupled this offer with the intimation that his Government would immediately bring in an Act to tax these pastoral leaseholds to the same extent as they would have suffered by the breach of the covenant of their leases, thus, in other words, professing to keep faith in the letter while deliberately breaking it in the spirit. This offer was also coupled with the stipulation that we should join with him in a public announcement in the Press that his Government had done the right thing, and that we were satisfied. Naturally, my committee refused to be parties to any such hollow deception.

"The Government of Queensland can pass what legislation they like, and use their sovereign power as they pleased; but, being a borrowing country, if their legislation involves, as this Land Act

Amendment Act of 1920 does, breach of faith or definite hostility to capital, as much of their other recent legislation does, then the State of Queensland is bound to suffer the inevitable penalty of being refused further loans.

"The Lieutenant-Governor, in his speech at the opening of Parliament, is only throwing dust in the eyes of the electors of Queensland when he tries to lay the blame on the Queensland delegation, or on certain London financiers, that rests, in fact, solely on the shoulders of the present Government of Queensland owing to their deliberate breach of faith.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Signed) E. H. HITCHINS,

"Secretary, British Australasian Society,
"96 Leadenhall street, E.C.

"25th August."

He had other quotations which showed that the Premier himself shifted from pillar to post in the hope of trying to improve the position when he was in the old country, and he failed absolutely, because right deep down there was a distinct breach of contract. If it were possible for the Government to do those things, why was it necessary to bring in an amending Act in 1919?

The PREMIER: To amend the previous Act.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Of course, to amend the previous Act. The hon. gentleman knew that his Government had blundered badly. They had discredited Queensland and had robbed it of its fair name, and now the Premier tried to make out that he had not been responsible. The position to-day was that public servants were being asked to take debentures to the extent of 10 per cent. of their salary, yet the Premier tried to make it appear that his Government had not been responsible. The country, at the recent election, gave the answer, notwithstanding the statements made by the Premier and his colleagues.

The PREMIER: He was not going to allow the hon. member, by taking up an insincere attitude, to misrepresent the case outside Parliament. The hon. member very carefully evaded the point he had made about being a member of the Government that introduced the principle in the House.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He has told you that he was successful in getting it out.

The PREMIER: The hon. member must have been a party to the Bill when it was first drafted in Queensland, and a party to its introduction in the Assembly. If, afterwards, he yielded to the pressure of the squatters of Queensland, that was a matter that was probably of no credit to him. At any rate, it did not excuse his first attitude. If the hon. member thought it was such a vital principle undermining the Constitution of Queensland and was disgraceful and dishonourable on the part of the Government, why was he a member of the Government that introduced it?

Mr. FERRIS: He agreed to it on the second reading.

The PREMIER: Yes; the second reading was passed, and the clause was altered in Committee. The hon. member read a long extract from a letter written by Mr. Hitchins, secretary of the British Australasian Society in London, which was composed mostly of big pastoral companies, and

Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

in that letter there was a reference made to a suggestion emanating from him (Mr. Theodore) in regard to the repeal of the Act. He wanted to put that before hon. members in order to show what a weak case the hon. member for Bulimba had. He was able to test their bona fides, because, at the various stages of his discussion in London with the pastoralists, they kept emphasising the fact that it was not a question of finance that was concerning them.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It was with you.

The PREMIER: Yes. It was one of the important factors with him, because the Government recognised that they should pay the rent. He was not denying that £ s. d. was a big consideration with the Queensland Government. There were two factors with them—they had to get additional revenue and cure a gross anomaly as between the grazing farmers and the pastoralists.

Mr. MORGAN: It could have been done in another way.

The PREMIER: Yes, it could, as he would show them. The pastoralists' representatives emphasised time and again that with them the money was only a bagatelle. It was only £100,000 a year spread over 400,000 square miles of country, and on any individual holding it did not amount to any more than £200 or £300 a year extra rent. He said, "Very well; if that is the case—if you are not concerned about the money—we can cure the anomaly by specially taxing these protected leases, and, at the same time, get the revenue we want. I am prepared, if you will withdraw your opposition, to recommend to my Government to repeal the Act, and we will place upon those leases special taxation which will bring in the exact equivalent of the rental." What happened in regard to the financial aspect? They would not agree to it at all. It tested their bona fides as to whether a principle was at stake. They shifted their ground and said they were against it. That was what Mr. Hitchin was referring to in the letter which the hon. member quoted at such great length. The hon. member had not a leg to stand upon. If he were honest, he would admit that, by the action of the Kidston Government, the action of the Denham Government—in passing legislation such as Land Resumption Acts, the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act, which dispossessed owners, as well as the Mining on Private Land Act—they were enacting much greater interference with vested interests than this Government had done under this Act. There was not one solid argument which could be used against the action of the Queensland Government. He was rather astounded to find that men, who were supposed to represent farmers' interests in Parliament—such as the hon. member for Burnett and the hon. member for Marilla—so wrongheadedly were standing out against the Government in regard to this matter, without any logic, and were prepared to give back to the squatter the rents which the Land Court had said were fair, while extracting from the farmers the rents they always had paid.

Mr. MORGAN: No; we say, reduce the farmers' rents.

The PREMIER: They had never heard that cry before, and it was advanced now only with a view to excusing their friendliness

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

towards the squatters and their opposition to the grazing farmer in this matter. The hon. member—who talked about doing the right thing, about undoing the wrong that had been done—could not show, in the first place, that any wrong had been done. What he wanted him to have done was to repeal the Act, and thus make to the squatters of Queensland a gift of the large sum paid in rentals which had been fixed by the Land Court, and place the squatters again upon their favourable basis of getting their land at one-third that which the farmers had to pay for the same class of country.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER: The Treasurer had surrounded this business with quite a new argument. When the Bill was going through they did not hear that the Premier was going to use as an argument the fact that the agreement did not contain anything which would show that repudiation was being carried out by the amending Act. They claimed that the pastoral section of the community had made big profits and were able to pay increased taxation, and they were going to make them do it. If the present Government could repudiate the conditions under which the squatters received their leases, they would next turn their attention to the grazing farmer, or the agricultural farmer, and alter the conditions under which those tenants of the Crown received their leases. The Premier made reference to repudiation in the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act, and claimed that some past Administration was responsible for the confiscation of rights under that Act. In the 1915-1916 session the hon. gentleman holding the position of Premier to-day moved—

"That it is desirable that a Bill be introduced to amend the Rights in Water and Water Conservation and Utilization Act of 1910 in certain particulars."

If there were any repudiation, why did not they, in that amending Bill, rectify the injustice? A great song had been made because money could not be borrowed from the old country, because of certain representations which had been made, and not because of the action of the Government. Listen to what the Government said in 1915—

"With the object of carrying out a gigantic scheme of railway construction which will not be of the slightest value to the workers and producers of the State, the present Government are again in the London money market. 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 and interest at a time when loans aggregating nearly £15,000,000 will be close upon due for payment, and further loans will have to be floated to redeem them."

That was contained in the Labour bible, the "little red book," in 1915, when commenting upon a loan which they thought was going to be unsuccessful on the other side, and they showed that it would be unsuccessful because, as they claimed, the money-lenders had no confidence in the then Government. What the Government said against the past Government, he claimed, held good against the Government to-day.

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

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER (continuing): The "little red book," which he had quoted from, said that the Government believed in the abolition of public borrowing. Yet to-day they found the Government asking for a loan of £20,000,000.

Mr. FLETCHER: He had listened very attentively to the Premier, but the main issue was blinded by many words. It was a matter of principle. An agreement should be held binding, whether by word or deed, and the Government should be an example to the rest of the community as to how to act in such a matter. He thought the Premier was going to say there was no Act, but there was the Act of 1905, which gave certain conditions and concessions, which was more binding than an agreement. The Premier said the Act made provision for amendments subject to conditions. He had looked up the Act and had found that it did not apply in this sense. He would read the two clauses. The Act of 1905 said—

"The annual rent for each period after the first shall not exceed the annual rent payable for the next preceding period by more than one-half of the annual rent payable for such preceding period: Provided that nothing in this subsection shall be deemed to limit the maximum rent which may be determined under section eleven of the Land Act, 1902."

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: The leases were issued under the 1902 Act.

Mr. FLETCHER: Section 11 of the 1902 Act stated—

"If during the term of the lease of any holding any public works are executed by or on behalf of the Government on or near the holding, and by reason thereof the value of the lease is, in the opinion of the Minister, enhanced, the court, upon a reference by the Minister in that behalf, shall reassess the rent, having regard only to such enhancement, and the rent so determined shall thereafter be payable for the remainder of the term, or until the rent is again assessed under this part of the Act, as the case may be."

That had nothing to do with the fact of cattle having gone up in value. It was not applicable.

The PREMIER: You have not quoted the section of the 1905 Act which stipulated that that Act was subject to amendment.

Mr. FLETCHER: Section 2 said that it was subject to amendment provided the Government went on with the construction of public works.

The PREMIER: No. Every Act passed by this Parliament is subject to amendment.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Premier said they were defending the squatter against the grazing farmer; but it was nothing of the sort—it was simply a matter of principle. He had no brief for the squatter, but if they broke an agreement the whole country was injured. He agreed with the Premier that the rents were too low, but if they made an agreement they had to stick to it, even if it was a bad one, just the same as if it was a good one.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): Members of the Opposition had a perfect right to criticise, but it was deplorable to see the ignorance of some hon. members when they talked about the so-called "Repudiation Act." He advised the hon. member for Port Curtis, before he spoke again on the matter, to find

out the true facts in connection with it. In the districts represented by the hon. member for Barcoo and himself a local man could not be got to oppose the Labour candidates, and that in itself would prove that the men who were on the land in those districts knew the true state of affairs. If the present Government had been so cruel as to take something away from the pastoralists which had been given to them, the people would have made an outcry about it. The 50 per cent. restriction only applied to grazing selections or pastoral holdings taken up prior to 1902. Why one law was made for the man on the land who took his selection up before 1902 and a different one for the man who took it up after 1902, he could not understand, but that was exactly how the matter stood.

If there was any protection at all to be given, it should have been given to the man who took up his land after 1902, because the men who took up their land after 1902 had gone through more droughts and [9.30 p.m.] lost more stock than the men who took up their land prior to 1902. When the Philp Government passed that Act there was distress among landholders all over the State, and stock were dying in every portion of the State. The financial institutions would not advance money to assist those persons to restock their holdings unless they got an extension of their leases. Strange to say, it was not till 1905 that the so-called "restriction" with regard to the raising of rents was brought about. The late Minister for Lands, Mr. Bell, brought in the Bill, and shot it through the House in the early hours of the morning. In any case, that law, like any other law in Queensland, was subject to amendment by Parliament. The result was that some lessees paid 4d. and 5d. per acre, whilst for other land of similar quality, separated only by a wire fence from that same land, the lessees paid a rental which was considerably lower. The previous Government recognised the injustice occasioned by these inequalities, and the hon. member for Balinba was a member of the Government which passed the second reading of a Bill containing a similar provision to the so-called "Repudiation Act" of this year. He would strongly advise new members of the House not to be led by a parrot cry made by men who got up in the House and made statements when they did not know what they were saying. If there was no other reason for passing the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920, that Act should have been passed for the one reason alone—that it brought all holdings to the same level in regard to the fixing of rent. Quoting from official figures which he had obtained from the Lands Department, he found that in his own electorate—the Mitchell district—there was a total number of 1,556 grazing selections, out of which only 477 were protected by the 50 per cent. limitation in rent; while, on the other hand, there were sixty-nine big holdings in the Mitchell district, held principally by absentee landlords—some of them in England, and others in various parts of the Commonwealth. They did not live in this State, and were, therefore, contributing very little to the consolidated revenue. Sixty-six out of these big holdings, out of sixty-nine, were protected by the 50 per cent. limitation in rent, and it was the shareholders in those big holdings in England who pulled the money ring when the Premier visited England in connection with loan matters. He

Mr. Smith.]

desired to stress the point that it was not the Government that fixed the rent, but an independent body of men above Parliament, known as "the Land Court." Some hon. members opposite talked a great deal about being the poor man's friends. He said they talked with their tongues in their cheeks when they talked like that, because, in doing so, they were not assisting the small man on the land but the big absentee landholder. They were really taking the part of the big man every time they got up and howled about the so-called "Repudiation Act."

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to point out to hon. members that the question now before the Committee deals with the Agent-General for the State. The debate has, apparently, worked round to something that could more properly be discussed on some of the Estimates of the Lands Department. A good deal of latitude has been allowed to hon. members on both sides, but I would ask hon. members, in further discussing the vote, to keep strictly to the question before the Committee.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) said that he would like to deal with the extravagance of the Government, and their protestations regarding the need for economy. He would like to see some evidence of that desire. The hon. member for Enoggera, who moved the reduction of the vote by £2,000, pointed out very clearly that, on that vote alone, there was room for economy. They had heard the Premier making accusations against certain gentlemen who had gone to the old country; they had heard him make some extravagant statements; but all the hon. gentleman said had only gone to show that the sole reason for the deplorable financial position of Queensland, was not the visit of the delegation to England, but the actions of the Government themselves. With regard to the hon. gentleman's attack on the delegation, all he could say was that, if their financial position was so bad that three gentlemen could go to England and prevent the Government getting money with which to carry out an immigration policy, then the position of the State must be very bad indeed. He quite admitted that it was the duty of the Opposition to assist the Government in getting money; but it was not the fault of the Opposition, or of the men who went to England, that the Government were unable to get money. The very fact that it was necessary for the Premier to go to England for money proved conclusively that the Government had no more idea of economy than the prodigal son. The most important thing in the interests of the State, in the interests of progress and of immigration to fill their spare spaces, was for the Government to admit their responsibility for the position in which they found themselves. They all knew how the late Premier said that he was going to make the pastoralists squeal. The two Acts of repudiation cited by the Premier were not done to get money. The Government had done everything that it was possible to do to get money, and they had done things that were absolutely disreputable. They had done things that were not fair and square and honest: and, if the people of Queensland were going to rectify the position they had placed themselves in by putting in power a Government who were reckless and regardless of the principles of honesty, they would have to meet the position fairly in the face.

[*Mr. Smith.*]

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

Mr. MORGAN moved the reduction of the vote by £1. He had already given his reasons for the amendment.

Question—That £14,999 only be granted—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 29.	
Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.	" King
" Barnes, W. H.	" Logan
" Bebbington	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Moore
" Cattermull	" Morgan
" Clayton	" Nott
" Corscr	" Petrie
" Costello	" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Deacon	" Roberts, T. R.
" Edwards	" Sear
" Elphinstone	" Taylor
" Fletcher	" Walker
" Green	" Warren
" Jones	

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Taylor.

NOES, 37.	
Mr. Barber	Mr. Huxham
" Bertram	" Kirwan
" Brennan	" Land
" Bulcock	" Larcombe
" Collins	" McCormack
" Conroy	" Mullan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Payne
" Cooper, W.	" Pease
" Coyne	" Peterson
" Dash	" Pollock
" Dunstan	" Riordan
" Ferrieks	" Ryan
" Fihelly	" Stopford
" Foley	" Theodore
" Forde	" Weir
" Gilday	" Wellington
" Gillies	" Wilson
" Gledson	" Winstanley
" Hartley	

Tellers: Mr. Pease and Mr. Weir.

Resolved in the negative.

Original question put and passed.

AUDIT OFFICE.

The PREMIER moved that £14,935 be granted for "Audit Office." There were very few votes to call attention to except those brought about by the increased classification; £13,450 was spent last year and a little more was asked for this year.

Mr. CORSER wanted to know if the members would be able to get the report of the Auditor-General on State enterprises before they came to that vote. Last year's Auditor-General's report on State enterprises which he held in his hand had never been dealt with by the House, and he would like to get an assurance from the Premier that they would get this year's report before the vote came on.

The PREMIER: He would be happy to make inquiries from the Auditor-General as to when he would have his report ready; but the Government had no control whatever over the Auditor-General in the matter of his report. There was no control over the Auditor-General in the matter at all. He would ask the Auditor-General when he expected to have his report ready.

Question put and passed.

COMMISSIONER OF PRICES.

The PREMIER moved that £4,185 be granted for "Commissioner of Prices." This was a new vote made possible by the

passage of the Act at the beginning of the year. He thought the Commissioner was doing good work under the Act that was passed.

Mr. KERR: He would like an assurance from the Premier that no new appointments were anticipated. He would like to know if the staff were drawn from the public departments. A Commissioner is appointed at £800, but he had nothing to say against that. Then they found an inspector at £400. That was essential also. They found that there was a chief clerk at £310, a typist at £100, and a messenger at £75. It seemed rather ridiculous to designate the only clerk in a small office like that—a subdepartment, they might say, of the State Enterprises Office—as a chief clerk. The department could easily have been dovetailed into one of the other departments, for the simple reason that they knew some public servants were not fully engaged and could do the work if a rearrangement were made. That would save £100 for a clerk and £75 for the messenger. A clerk in another office could do the work of looking after the Commissioner and inspector and attending to the necessary correspondence.

Mr. MORGAN: He intended to move a reduction in the vote by £1 in order to call attention to the way in which the dairymen of Queensland had been treated. (Opposition "Hear, hears!") Requests were made by the dairymen of Queensland that the price of butter should be placed upon London parity, as in other States of Australia. The price originally was fixed without inquiry in any shape or form, and any man who had followed the evidence at the recent inquiry must come to the conclusion that every bit of evidence submitted to Mr. Ferry was in the direction of proving that the dairymen were being sweated in order to provide the cities and towns with butter at a price that was not giving them fair remuneration. It was stated by the Dairymen's Association that they were losing at the rate of £8,000 per week because the price here was not the same as was fixed in other States of Australia. Other evidence submitted by them was to the effect that they were not making a living at present prices. Witness after witness said that farmers were abandoning dairying. He would like to read an extract from a newspaper as to what happened in Maryborough—

"THE PRICE OF BUTTER.

"Maryborough, 3rd December.

"Referring to the decision of the Prices Commissioner not to grant the request of the dairying and producing interests to increase the local price of butter to the London parity, as announced in to-day's 'Courier,' Mr. J. E. Dean (chairman of directors of the Maryborough Co-operative Dairy Co., Limited) said that the evidence of every witness before the Commissioner showed that the cost of producing commercial butter was more than 1s. 7d. per lb., mentioned by Mr. Ferry. He was present at the first day of the inquiry, and he knew that the evidence was distinctly against the Commissioner's decision. The evidence showed that the present price was not sufficient to meet the cost of production. The position to-day was that dairymen were selling out all over the place, and men were leaving the land or else reducing their herds so that their families might obtain the high wages paid in the cities. He anticipated

that the dairy companies' executive would take the matter up, and deal with it at a meeting to be held later. It was a great mistake to compel the dairymen of Queensland, considering what they had suffered, to sell butter in Queensland at a lower price than what people in other States of the Commonwealth were receiving."

Only a day or so ago, the following paragraph was published by a Brisbane paper:—

"DECLINE IN FARMING AND DAIRYING.

"A falling off in the number of persons engaged in farming and dairying is shown by the annual report of the Department of Agriculture. Last year the number engaged in farming was 32,086, and in dairying 25,675, but the aggregate was fewer by 2,359 than in 1918, and in that year the total was fewer by 6,259 persons than in 1917. Thus, as applied to farming and dairying, the rural population was fewer by 8,618 persons than three years ago."

That was evidence from the Agricultural Department itself, which could not be refuted, showing that the dairying industry was gradually ceasing—that it was vanishing. Notwithstanding that, they had the Commissioner—he did not think he had done it deliberately, but evidently he was not the man for the position, because he could not weigh evidence—refusing to increase the price of butter. Every bit of evidence was in favour of an increase. The Housewives' Association of Brisbane, who alone objected or were there to represent the consumers, gave no evidence. In fact, the lady who appeared for them admitted that the wives and children of the dairy farmers were subject to slavery, that they were not getting a fair thing.

The PREMIER: Are not the farmers getting a record price at the present time?

Mr. MORGAN: That was no argument at all, because it cost more to produce butter to-day than ever it did, with the exception of the drought period. Everybody knew that the dairymen had had a hard struggle for two or three years. The Government should do all they possibly could to find high markets for those people, and they should get the very highest price it was possible to get, independent of the cost of production. A great many of them owed money to the Government. They owed rent for their lands which they had not been able to pay during the last two or three years, and if the Commissioner fixed the price of butter at the present cost of production, how would it be possible for those men to meet their liabilities, and pay their income tax during the coming year? The same thing applied in regard to the price of meat.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I request the hon. member to keep to the vote.

Mr. MORGAN: He was dealing with the fixation of prices, and was showing why cattle were being sent out of Queensland. The Commissioner was doing a great deal of injury to the State, owing to the way in which he was dealing with the primary producer. He asked the Premier to give a good reason why the dairymen of Queensland should be compelled to sell their butter at 36s. per cwt. less than the price in the Southern States. It was the same with other produce—they were compelled to sell it at

Mr. Morgan.]

less than the cost of production. The Commissioner had not been called upon to fix the price of board and lodging charged by hotels and others, who had increased their prices when they were paying huge prices for all commodities. Those people had raised their tariff as much as £1 per day in many cases, but they had not been brought down again, and the Government had done nothing to bring about proper prices. They taxed the poor, unfortunate small farmer when they first got into office, by seizing his butter and selling it at lower than the cost of production. They compelled him to sell his wheat at 3s. 6d. per bushel, when it was worth 3s., and to-day they were doing the same thing. Country members did not intend to sit down and see the farmers being unjustly treated.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*) was certain the Government were studying economy on this occasion, in the interest of the industrialist and the city dwellers, at the expense of the dairy farmer in particular. He was pleased to hear the Premier say that the Government should be a model employer. The Commissioner had fixed the price of butter at 238s. a cwt. for consumption in Queensland.

The PREMIER: The highest price that ever has ruled.

Mr. NOTT: If the Commissioner had not fixed that rate they could have obtained 274s. When industrialists approached the Arbitration Court and received more wages they were told, "Good luck to you if you can get more." In this case the dairymen could get more, but they were blocked and were forced to take a smaller amount. It was manifestly unfair. It would mean there would be less money coming into Queensland. The less satisfactory the conditions of the dairyman were, the greater would be the tendency for people to remain in the cities. If they had received the prices they ought to have received during the last two years there would have been a chance of men doing well at dairy farming, instead of going out of the business as they had been doing. People with capital would come here, and greater amounts would be received by way of taxation, thus lightening the financial burden of the State. There was a necessity for increased production, but it would not be brought about in this manner. He hoped the Government would give assistance to the establishment of secondary industries in connection with dairying, and go into the question of the manufacture of powdered milk, casein, and those things.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The unfortunate thing about the primary producer was, they brought witnesses along, not to prove the actual cost of production, but to make out that it cost 6s. 4d., 6s. 6d., and one even went so far as to say it cost 6s. 9d. to produce a pound of butter. To try to make the Committee believe that because all the evidence was in favour of an increased price for butter it was one of the "bloomers" the primary producers made in stating their case to the Commissioner. He had never heard one bit of evidence brought forward to show that the Price Fixing Commissioner did anything detrimental to the industry. As far as he had been able to glean, the Commissioner was a gentleman who gave every attention to the work upon which he was engaged. He made full inquiry and search, and did every-

[*Mr. Nott.*

thing it was possible for him to do to ascertain the facts. If the primary producers were so foolish as not to bring along the proper facts for the Commissioner, whose fault was that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did not want them.

At half-past 10 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under Standing Order No. 306, I must now leave the chair, and make my report to the House.

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

The House adjourned at thirty-one minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.