Queensland

Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

MONDAY, 20 DECEMBER 1920

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MONDAY, 20 DECEMBER, 1920.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 11 o'clock a.m.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ELEVENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question again stated—That £21,308 be granted for "Chief Office."

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): Last Friday night, under cover of a reply to certain matters, the Attorney-General chose to make an attack, in discussing the subject of Ministers' expenses, upon two members of the Opposition who had occupied Ministerial positions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I made no attack.

HON. J. G. APPEL: All he could say was that in the "Daily Standard" there were big headlines, which he supposed were intended to attract notice. The words "Startling Disclosures" appeared, inferring that certain facts and circumstances had been found out by the Minister, which had been concealed before. That was the natural inference to be drawn; and, furthermore, in connection with that attack, he had suggested to the Minister that he should give the whole of the items of the amount which he stated that he (Mr. Appel) had expended in connection with one trip to the Northern portion of the State. In place of that, the hon. gentleman selected one or two items, which he would presently mention in order to attempt to discover the items, because the account had increased during the last five and a-half years from what was stated by the responsible officers of the department, £900, to £1,200, and then lately, as stated by a supporter of the Government in the Legislative Council, to £1,800, and now it had advanced to £2,000 odd. He desired to get some idea as to what had caused that increase in the expenditure as disclosed by the responsible officers of the department in connection with questions asked elsewhere and a question which was asked in this House. He had sent his private secretary, first of all, to the Home Department for the purpose of obtaining particulars of the vouchers, which he asked to-day should be laid upon the table of the House, to enable members and the public to see what those vouchers disclosed. They were vouchers of like character to those which members of the present Executive refused to disclose. He asked and begged that they be laid upon the table of the House. It would shorten the matter if he read the report made by his secretary after her visit to two departments. It was as follows:—

> "18th December, 1920.
>
> "Acting under your instructions I interviewed the Home Secretary, and made the request that he would grant permission for the vouchers of your Northern trip to be made available for perusal. In reply, Mr. McCormack regretted that the matter had been brought up, but his office had nothing to do with it. The vouchers in question

were in the possession of Mr. Mullan, and had been in the Attorney-General's office for nearly two years, having been sent for at that time by Mr. Ryan. To obtain the information requested by you from the Home Office would take some considerable time, but if the request was made to Mr. Mullan, who had shown them to him in the House, he was sure the papers would be made available to you. I thereupon endeavoured to see Mr. Mullan, but he informed me through the messenger that he could not possibly see me this morning, as he was very busy. I then requested to see the Under Secretary, and did so. In reply to my request that you be informed as to the amount of coal consumed on the voyage of the 'Otter,' and the cost of the furnishings supplied to the crew, these being the principal items, together with the cost of distributions to the aboriginal mission stations, that occasioned your desire to see the vouchers, Mr. Carter replied that he would obtain the information from the Minister who had the vouchers. The Under Secretary returned, however, stating that he could not find Mr. Mullan, and that on thinking the matter over, he did not think he would be justified in giving information from vouchers belonging to another department. I pointed out that the Home Secretary had sent me to the Minister for Justice. The Under Secretary thereupon suggested that you ask Mr. Mullan for information by way of question in the House on Monday. I informed him of the statement that the vouchers had been in the Attorney-General's office for nearly two years. He replied this was not a fact, they had been there only a few days.

"I was, consequently, unable to obtain the information you desired."

It was a tradition of the Home Department when he became Home Secretary that the Ministers of that department had never drawn what were termed "travelling allowances"; that, if they travelled, the actual expenses incurred in connection with their official visits were charged by vouchers. As he had never drawn travelling allowances from other departments by way of actual fees, he did not consider it strange in any way. The Home Department always had had to do a considerable amount of entertaining to local authorities, to other bodies, and to visitors coming from other States. It had carried out that policy long before he had become Minister.

The PREMIER interjected.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman had often partaken of the hospitality of the Home Department.

The PREMIER: I certainly have not, at your expense.

HON. J. G. APPEL: No, but he had at the expense of the State.

The PREMIER: No.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He had had a great deal more since. He (Mr. Appel) was not going to be led off the track. Two of his predecessors, Mr. Hawthorn and Mr. Airey, had made trips to the North at intervals of three years, and it was represented to him that those trips should be continued for obvious reasons—that there were departmental matters in connection with local authorities and health which could not properly be inquired into from the Southern portion of the State, and also that aboriginal settlements, mission stations, and other places should be regularly inspected. He fell in with the view, not that it was any particular pleasure to him, because he had means of his own, and had always had, of occupying his leisure in a more pleasant way than travelling about the country receiving deputations. However, a trip was taken on that particular occasion for what might be termed a threefold purpose. He had conveyed the local authority representatives in the "Otter" from Brisbane to Townsville, and thence by rail to Charters Towers, to enable them to hold a meeting of the executive, the minutes and proceedings of which were contained in the official record, which showed that the meeting was held on Friday, 1st May, 1914, at 8 p.m. That was done at the request of the Northern members, and he thought a rapprochement between the local authorities in Southern Queensland and those of Northern Queensland was very desirable. For that purpose he had offered them a trip to Townsville in the "Otter," and they were to be returned in the usual boat from Townsville to Brisbane, as the "Otter" had to proceed to Torres Strait on the mission with which he was charged. The members of the executive of the Local Authorities' Association and several members of Parliament embarked at Brisbane and proceeded to Townsville. He thought Mr. Allan, who was then member for Kurilpa, and Mr. John May, who was then member for Flinders, proceeded from Brisbane to Townsville with the local authorities. He was unable to go with them, as departmental matters at the last moment prevented him, and he had to join the party at Townsville. They were entertained by the local authorities at Townsville and Charters Towers. The meeting was productive of a considerable amount of good, and, in his opinion, the payment of the expenses in connection with that trip by the department was absolutely justified. From thence, at the invitation of the late President of the Council, the Hon. William Hamilton, and of the late Mr. John May, he made a trip with them through their two electorates. They had arranged with the Under Secretary for Mines—as it would otherwise have been impossible to visit all the places that they desired him to visit—for a special train, and he approved of this plan. It was also necessary that the majority of the party should sleep during the nights on the train, owing to the lack of accommodation. The object of that trip was twofold. In the first place, that terrible scourge typhoid fever was raging in the North in a very acute form, and they desired that other matters in connection with mining should be inquired into. Those matters were dealt with. He visited the different hospitals, which were then full of typhoid cases; and, in some instances, the typhoid was so acute that the doctors forbade him to go into that particular ward, although he was quite willing to do so. That the visit was productive of good was undoubted, and immediately upon his return he sent the Commissioner of Public Health to the North to make an exhaustive examination, and he directed that certain works should be carried out which had done something to minimise that terrible scourge. The visit included a trip to Mount Emu, about 90 miles from Hughenden, over

a very rough road, for the purpose of inspecting the Mount Emu Goldfield, which promised then to be of some value to the State. He had been told since the adjournment that members on the caucus side of the House proposed to deny that such a trip had been taken by him with the two gentlemen he had mentioned. Fortunately, since then two photographs had been handed to him, showing those two members and their friends whom they had requested him to invite to accompany the party as their guests. Under one of the photographs [which he produced] were the names of the members and their friends, every one of whom he ventured to say was what might be termed a good Labour man.

The PREMIER: Do you say that Mr. Hamilton was on the "Otter"?

HON. J. G. APPEL: He did not. The trip had three phases, and he was dealing with the phase in respect to which the Minister mentioned a special train. As to the "Otter," the Minister was not responsible for the supplies. The "Otter" had made such trips on previous occasions, and the steward and the cook, who was the chief cook from Dunwich, determined what was to be taken. The Minister complained about a gramophone, but it was an instrument which had been in the possession of the department for some years, and was used by the chief messenger to give pleasure to the inmates of Dunwich, and the children at the aboriginal mission stations. The "Otter" was absent from Brisbane for seventy-five days. During that time the crew received full navy rations of grog and beer; the captain was permitted to entertain any persons who came to the steamer for the purpose of seeing him if he were absent; and with all the entertainments and refreshment for deputations and others, the amount of liquor consumed cost £120 16s. 10d. Contrast that with the guzzle given to Mr. Hunter, who then was a private member of Parliament! Probably, there were fourteen or fifteen members present, and the cost was £121 15s. for one night's guzzle; and they were not satisfied with a gramophone or an old piano, they had to have a band to entertain them. (Laughter.) In that one night's guzzle they actually consumed a larger amount of liquor than was consumed on the "Otter" with a crew, and with passengers to the number of twenty, with the entertainments that had to be given, with the spirits that were given to the different lightships with other light stores, and with the present of spirits that was made to one of the Northern hospitals which happened to be out of them for the moment. Contrast that also with the visit of the same member to Canungra, where he was the guest of Laheys Limited, and to his own home. The expenses of visiting Roma and Canungra were given as £53 5s. 4d.—what that was for was not stated—and then there were railway refreshments £15 6s. 1d., special train £22 6s. 10d., or a total of £90 18s. 3d. Then they had this extraordinary thing in connection with the Premier's travelling expenses to England. The full amount of the hon. gentleman's expenses for steamer fares, railway fares, hotel accommodation, cables, telegrams, car hire, exchange, etc., were given, and then appeared the item "Travelling allowances, £957 15s.," showing that the Premier had charged every penny that he expended, and drew in addition to the salary which he was receiving all the time, the sum of £957 15s. No wonder——

The PREMIER: No wonder when the Home Secretary charged £2,300 for a Northern trip.

HON. J. G. APPEL: On 22nd October, 1914, the present Treasurer, Mr. Fihelly, asked him (Mr. Appel) the following questions:—

"1. What was the total expense incurred by him and his party during the Southern trip?

"2. What expenses did he draw per day?

"3. What expenses per day were drawn by other individual members of the party?

"4. What were the respective salaries of these officers?

"5. What sum did banqueting and incidentals amount to?

"6. How many days were the party absent?"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"1. £272 8s. 7d.

"2. Nil.

"3. Nil.

"4. £800, £260.

"5. Banqueting, nil; purchase of articles for distribution to aborigines, £15 11s. 9d.; transit charges, telegrams, postage, papers, etc., £92 2s. 4d.

"6. Thirty-two days."

No individual travelling allowances were drawn, and the hotel expenses, etc., were £20 less than the total amount which might have been drawn in travelling allowances. Then Mr. Gilday asked him on 15th July, 1914, in connection with his Northern trip, the alleged expenditure on which had mounted up like a backblocks publican's slate over night. Mr. Gilday asked—

"What was the approximate expenditure incurred by the recent Northern tour, including cost of any alterations to the s.s. 'Otter?'"

The HOME SECRETARY replied—

"There were no alterations to the 'Otter' for the Northern tour, and the Home Secretary drew no personal expenses. The expense of the Northern tour was approximately £988. The chief items of expenditure consisted of wages for extra crew, provisions, coal, water, insurance, temporary hands on steamer which took the place of 'Otter.'"

He would furthermore point out that at Townsville and Cairns the "Otter" was made available for the State school children. That was the only opportunity that the State school in those centres had ever had of participating in sea trips, and at the suggestion of the Under Secretary aerated waters, biscuits, and fruit were supplied to the children. In Rockhampton the "Otter" was occupied for twelve days in carrying out school trips, at Gladstone for three days, at Bundaberg for four days, and at Maryborough for nine days. That was the way in which the Home Secretary of that day expended money in connection with his trip. It was a method which was not confined to his own family and the particular satellites who flattered him, but was expended on every member of the community, whatever his politics might be.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: He was quite willing that the fullest publicity should be given to any expenditure whilst he occupied an official position. He begged the hon. gentleman who made the charge against him, and endeavoured to insinuate that he had just discovered certain items of expenditure which cast a reflection upon his (Mr. Appel's) honour, to lay the vouchers connected therewith upon the table of the House.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman said that the only part of his liquor bill for which he was responsible was £6. That was for one day. If he would multiply £6 by seventy-three, it would then be seen how his liquor bill compared with his (Mr. Appel's) liquor bill when he was Home Secretary. (Laughter.) He had never objected to a Minister travelling in the way he should travel, but he said that it was right and proper that any Minister, when he was asked to do so, should be prepared to submit the items of his expenditure to the House. He never received a penny personally, nor had any member of his family received a penny for travelling expenses, but the hon. gentleman who dealt with this matter on Friday last charged every item of his expenses to the department, and drew in addition £2 2s. per day. He had no objection to his vouchers being placed on the table of the House, and he asked the hon. gentleman to plank his vouchers on the table. (Opposition cheers.)

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): He wished to make a statement, and then leave the public to judge as to his position as a Cabinet Minister in connection with travelling expenses. For personal expenses during the year 1909-1910, he received from the Works Department £43 6s. During that period he visited Allora, Sydney, Melbourne, and Lowood on departmental business. During the year 1910-1911 he received from the Works Department £68 8s., and from the Treasury Department £81 18s., making a total of £150 6s. During that period he visited Maryborough, Port Douglas, Charters Towers, Cairns, Townsville, Mareeba, Herberton, Atherton, Ayr, Bowen, and Mackay, and he was away for one month. During the year 1911-1912 he received from the Treasury Department £71 10s., and from the Works Department £20 12s., making a total of £92 2s. In that year he was absent from official duties attending the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne, and giving evidence before the Sugar Commission in Sydney. In 1912-1913 he received from the Treasury Department £12 12s., and from the Works Department £16 16s., making a total of £29 8s.

The PREMIER: You are not giving the cost of your visit; you are only giving your own expenses.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was giving his own personal expenses. During the period mentioned he had to visit Melbourne on official business for the department. In the year 1913-1914 he received from the Treasury Department £93 10s. In connection with one of his visits that year he had to inquire with regard to a sum of money which was withheld by a certain person, whose name he need not give, and he ventured to say that by his action he succeeded in obtaining £3,000 which would not otherwise have been paid to the farmers. In 1913-1914, as he had said, he received £93 10s. from the Treasury Department, and £6 from the Works Department, making a total of £99 10s. During that period he visited Ayr, and the Premiers' and Treasurers' Conference at Melbourne. In 1914-1915 he received from the Treasury Department £20 5s., and from the Works Department £12 12s., making a total of £32 17s. During that
[11.30 a.m.] period Sir Hamilton Goold-Adams arrived by steamer from America, and he was deputed to meet him, and for that purpose he went to Sydney; during that same period he also visited Roma. He stated, with the full conviction of what he was saying, that the Minister deliberately and wilfully made a statement on Friday night which was not in accord with fact. He repeated that the Minister made the statement deliberately and wilfully, although he knew it was not in accord with fact. He (Mr. Barnes) was not able to get an advance copy of "Hansard," but the "Daily Mail" made the following statement:—

> "The Attorney-General went on to say that the Hon. W. H. Barnes, during his term of office as Minister, had drawn expenses for each of the two departments, the totals amounting to £754."

If that was a correct statement, it was an absolutely wilful statement made to damage a public man in the eyes of the public. What were the facts? The personal expenses received by him as Treasurer from the 7th February, 1911, to May, 1915, amounted to £279 15s., and the total expenses he received from the Works Department from the 23rd October, 1909, to the 22nd May, 1915, amounted to £167 4s. 6d., making a total altogether of £440.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is for only one department.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, for two departments. He had "got" the hon. gentleman there. There might be one small amount from the Education Department. He must have had some premonition that the House was going to be led by men who were disregardful of the honour of everyone else, so before he went out of office he got a list from the two departments in which he was interested. The lists showed that the personal expenses drawn by the Hon. W. H. Barnes during his term of office as Treasurer from 1909 till 26th May, 1915, totalled £249 6s. That was signed by "G. L. Beal, accountant to the Treasury." There was an addition of £21 and £9 9s. 9d. for steamer fares. Fortunately, for him, he also got a list from the Works Department which showed that he drew as personal expenses during the whole time he was at that department the sum of £167 4s. Yet they had a Minister who had the audacity and the impudence to try to down a man politically. He (Mr. Barnes) also acted as Premier for six months of that time, and not a brass farthing did he get in connection with that particular work, neither by increased emoluments or otherwise. Yet they had men—could he call them men—coming there and making a statement which was not correct, and making a statement purposely with the object of damaging a political opponent. It was a wilful and deliberate statement, and he challenged every Minister to lay an account of his personal expenses on the table.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: He had asked for the expenses of all Ministers to be laid on the table, and he challenged Ministers to do so.

The PREMIER: What about Mr Appel's expenses?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He (Mr. Barnes) was responsible only for his own personal expenses. The hon. member for Albert had already explained his own expenses, and he (Mr. Barnes) was responsible only for his own. The Minister had been mean enough to add the Under Secretary's expenses in order to damage him (Mr. Barnes) in the eyes of the country. Was there a Minister during the period from 1909 to 1915 whose expenses totalled less than £440. He would leave the public to judge for themselves.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) thought that in fairness to the country, as well as to members of the House, the whole of the papers in connection with the Ministers' trip abroad and throughout the country should be laid upon the table of the House, and at a later period he intended to move in that direction. He thought that so far there had been a little skirmishing for the purpose of securing certain political advantages.

The PREMIER: Who raised the question?

Mr. FRY: He was not in any way responsible for the expenses of Ministers, but he was responsible to a large number of electors, and he thought, from what he had heard, if an inquiry were held, the result would be something bordering upon scandal. As a member of the House he felt he was only doing a public duty in asking that the returns mentioned by him be forthwith laid upon the table, not only the returns actually charged to the Minister, but also those charged to responsible persons who were on the trip, because he understood that some of the expenses were not actually charged to the Minister, but to some of the persons travelling with him. As a representative of the public he demanded that the information be made available. There were other things they would like to know which might come up on another vote. He had in his hand some very important papers, which might afford interesting reading to the public, showing that Labour members had got work done at the penal settlement at 1d. per day, and cheated the unionists out of their just dues.

In connection with gambling, he wanted to ask the Minister was it the policy of the Government to favour street gambling? The Minister had said nothing on that point, although they expected him to either support or condemn street gambling. He thought he interpreted the feelings of the people correctly when he said they were opposed to the open practice of gambling on street corners. He did not want to go into details on the matter, but everybody knew that at any time they could go to the street corners and see two pennies flying into the air in any street. It was also a common thing to see a man standing with a book, surrounded by a small group of persons, and the small coins coming in in the way of betting. He wanted the Minister to say straight out, "This Government does stand for street betting," or "This Government does not stand for street betting." He would ask the Minister to make a statement deliberately and straightforwardly on the question of street gambling.

Mr. POLLOCK: You are not in order in reflecting upon the Prince like that.

Mr. FRY: He thought the Prince had the esteem of every man in the House; if not, he should have. At any rate, he had the love and affection of the majority of the people, and he thought the demonstration of that affection accounted to a great extent for the changed tone of members on the Government side of the House. He was not reflecting upon the Prince. He simply asked the Minister to make a straight-out declaration, and when he received the information, he would be satisfied.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): He had not intended to rise at this stage, but, in fairness to himself and the Committee, he wished to say a few words in reply to the statements of the hon. member for Albert and the hon. member for Bulimba.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Lay the figures on the table, and we will know what we are doing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was not his desire to enter into this matter at all.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: But you should have been truthful when you did go into it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He would show the hon. gentleman he was truthful if he would give him time. This was forced upon him by member after member during the session—particularly the hon. member for Bulimba, who kept nagging about paltry expenses of a few pounds—and it naturally reached the climax when the hon. member for Enoggera proceeded to read out an insignificant voucher.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And he has done the country good.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The last man in the House that he would desire to reflect upon was the hon. member for Albert, but the hon. members he referred to challenged him, so he had to give vouchers, and he gave the first one that he got. The hon. member for Albert had not challenged the accuracy of vouchers, or that expenditure had been incurred. Anyhow, they were not his figures, but the Auditor-General's.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Will you put them on the table of the House?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The figures were the Auditor-General's, and, if the Premier desired, he could place them on the table. If the figures which he gave to the House on Friday evening were wrong, then the officers of the various departments had done the hon. member for Bulimba an injustice, but he (the Attorney-General) refused to believe they were wrong.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Well, I have got the statements.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He was not going to read the whole of the list in his hand which he had got from the Public Works Department—probably the hon. gentleman had a copy of it—giving his expenses there as £475 odd, and the list from the Treasury Department, giving his expenses as £249 odd, which corresponded exactly with what he gave on Friday night, making the total £754.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Put them on the table.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the hon. gentleman persisted in challenging the figures, he would ask the Premier to have

an audit of the figures. He, personally, did not doubt them.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Put the whole lot on the table.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. gentleman was going to hedge. Did the hon. gentleman believe that he would submit figures to the House unless he believed they were official?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Yes, I believe you would.

The PREMIER: If the hon. gentleman wishes it. I will put an auditor on to take out the details and place them on the table.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The whole lot. (Interruption.) I am willing for mine to go alone.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was a matter for the Premier. If the figures were wrong, it was the officials who were wrong; but he denied that the officials were wrong.

The hon. member for Kurilpa referred to the matter of street gambling. As the Home Secretary had dealt with that matter on his Estimates, and given a reply to the hon. member for Toowong, it was hardly necessary for him to deal with the matter any further. He thought the leader of the Opposition had stated that a legal assistant had been appointed; but he could assure the hon. gentleman that it was merely a change of staff in regard to one of the lawyers in the office, and the position of record deposition clerk was not altered. Although it was a new name, it did not represent an increase in staff; it was merely one of the clerks being made record and deposition clerk.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): He did not want to detain the Committee long. He could see what was going on. The Government were stonewalling their own Estimates in order to avoid any discussion on the Railway Estimates.

The PREMIER: Only one member—the Minister—on this side has spoken this morning.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He had refrained from speaking on several departments for that reason. Everyone knew that when the late Home Secretary, Mr. Appel, went up North, Labour members were invited. It was an official visit to see the northern portions of the State. Lighthouses and hospitals in different places were visited, and a good part of the liquor on board was left at those places, which needed it very badly. It was a contemptible action for the Minister for Justice to charge the expenses of an official trip like that to the late Home Secretary. The gambling which had been carried on during the last two or three years, and the permits given by the Justice Department, was a disgrace to the State. He had heard school teachers say that they themselves had sold 50,000 penny tickets to the school children for gambling a pound note. That was a fine state of things for any Government to acknowledge and permit.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Who applied for the permit?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was not saying who applied for it. It did not matter two straws who applied for it. The Justice Department had no right to issue the permits. Coming to election matters, he found in connection with the Electoral Department that, so long as a returning officer or presiding officer was on the side of the Government, he could do what he liked at election time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must discuss that matter under the proper vote.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: This was for the Chief Officer, who was probably responsible for what he was speaking on.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must obey my ruling. I appeal to him not to introduce extraneous matter on this vote. If I allow the hon. member to raise this question, he will then want to raise something else.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In deference to the Chairman, he would bring the matter on under another vote, but this being the Chief Office of the Department of Justice, he thought that the Chief Officer was responsible. If the Chairman ruled that he was out of order in discussing the Chief Officer of the department and his action, he would not do so.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will realise that he can discuss the matter under the vote for "Electoral Registration."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would bow to the Chairman's ruling.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The subject of gambling had been brought prominently forward in connection with this vote. Some hon. members had hit out pretty hard, more especially with regard to what they termed "gamblers in foodstuffs," who had been likened to Ned Kellys and bandits of various descriptions. He would like to ask hon. members—who were the biggest gamblers in foodstuffs in Queensland to-day? He would take the Auditor-General's report for it. If it were a gamble—which he did not admit—the Government and those who were supporting them were the biggest gamblers in Queensland to-day. State stations for the year ended 30th June, 1920, made a net profit of £25,000; butchers' shops, £36,000; railway refreshment-rooms, £12,000; Produce Agency, £2,500; Babinda Hotel, £1,175. An accumulated profit of £145,000 had been made by the present Government out of the foodstuffs of the people of Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not deal with that subject any further, unless he is going to connect it immediately with the vote under discussion.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not look upon that system of work as gambling. In his opinion it was gambling where people contributed a certain amount of money out of which one to half a dozen obtained a return, and 50, or 100, or 1,000 got nothing. The Golden Casket, in which 100,000 persons contributed to the funds and a few hundred people won prizes and the remainder got nothing at all, was gambling pure and simple, and was the kind they wanted to deal with. He knew they could not by Act of Parliament make people as moral as they would like them to be, but by certain legislation they could put a preventive on their indulging in gambling and other practices which the general body of the community regarded as being to their detriment. If a man went to him to buy a ton of maize, there was a market price, and he obtained value for the money he tendered. Not by any stretch of

the imagination could that be termed "gambling." Gambling was that which was done on racecourses, at cards, and other things of a like nature. Were it not for the trafficking in foodstuffs, probably fifty times out of a hundred the man who owned them would get nothing for them. Why was it that in all the stores of Brisbane they found large supplies of foodstuffs? Simply because, up to the present, they had not the people to use them. The crop was garnered in the months of November and December, and had to carry on the whole of the people of this country for twelve months until the new crop came in. Who was going to control that matter during the intervening period? No one could tell what its value was likely to be. They could not put 400 or 500 loaves of bread into a household and say, "Here is your year's supply." The same with sugar and all those commodities. If hon. members would only consider the question, they would find it was not a gamble, but was legitimate business. He challenged any hon. member to show where, to the detriment of the people, any gambling had been carried on by any person engaged in that line of trade.

He hoped Ministers would see in future that the greatest possible care was taken of the expenditure connected with their various trips. The people did not expect them to travel like paupers. If they had nothing to be ashamed of, and put their accounts on the table of the House, the public would have nothing to complain about. What had come to light during the last two or three days was not to the credit of that Chamber, and it was to be hoped that a better system would be carried out in future.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): He noticed the Minister, in speaking of gambling, referred to members who had been to him to obtain permits. He did not wish to get out of any blame in that direction. He had been to the Justice Department. He believed they could publicly cut out this gambling evil. If it were wrong, the Minister had no right to grant permits to any men.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Personally, I do not think it is wrong to grant the permits we are granting for educational, charitable, and such like objects.

Mr. WARREN: In one case in which he had gone to the Minister he believed he was perfectly right. If it were wrong, the Minister should be quite strong enough to put his foot down and stop it. The charges and counter-charges that had been made had created a very bad impression, and it was not right that the matter should be allowed to stop where it was. He did not stand for "guzzle-and-glutton" trips. If there were one item of truth in the charges and counter-charges, it was a scandal and a disgrace to that House. The sooner the Ministers who were responsible got to the bottom of it and let the public know where the disgraceful proceedings started and where they were going to end, the better it would be for the country. He knew that different Ministers had different amounts of expenditure; but where a Minister dipped into the Treasury for his personal gain, it was immoral and wrong. Because the present Ministers imagined that some Ministers in the past had done wrong, it was no justification for a democratic Ministry to follow in their footsteps. The country was going through a time which did not warrant it.

The TREASURER: You admit we are a democratic Ministry?

Mr. WARREN: The democratic Ministry had as long an arm for the Treasury purse as the old Tory Ministry. They should look for something better, and he [12 noon] wanted to raise his voice against that kind of thing. The money was being deliberately wasted, and the Committee had no right to sanction such excessive expenditure. He did not ask that the Minister should carry on the office in a niggardly fashion, but the time was ripe for a different and more honest method of dealing with those matters. Let them stand up for fair dealing, and if that were done they would not be continually having charges thrown across the Chamber to the disgrace of the Chamber.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): Every member of the Committee would agree with him that the recent elections was largely fought on the ground of economy, and certainly the debate that had taken place on that vote would shatter the confidence of the people of Queensland in the present Administration, and also in past Administrations, in the matter of economy if the figures which had been placed before them were correct. The debate had been anything but inspiring, although it certainly had been enlightening. It had been enlightening, not only to new members and others, but also to the electors of Queensland, and he hoped that as a result of the debate members would realise their responsibility to the electors in the matter of economy. No one desired that Ministers should act in a niggardly fashion, but no Administration could justify extravagance by insinuating that the Administration which preceded them were also extravagant. At the present time they were faced with a very serious position. None could gainsay that fact. There was unemployment on every hand, and, owing to retrenchment and the closing down of mines, the next six or twelve months was going to be a very critical time for the State of Queensland. He was not a "Jeremiah," as none had a greater confidence in the State than he had. He believed that the State could and would overcome all its difficulties; but, still, they could not hide the fact that they were faced with a very serious position.

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

Mr. GREEN: He was discussing the question of extravagance and Ministerial expenditure, and he hoped, if the debate would do nothing else, that it would at least impress upon those in charge of the government of the State the absolute necessity of practising economy, and of beginning at the fountain-head—that was, their own expenditure. He had gone through the various votes in connection with the Justice Department, and he found that the total vote for contingencies and incidental expenditure last year amounted to £48,000, whereas, for this year, they were asked to vote £71,000; an increase of over £23,000—equal to 48.5 per cent. increase.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You must remember that there has been an election.

Mr. GREEN: Right throughout the Estimates there had been an increase in connection with incidentals. No member of the Committee objected to the increases to the public servants. The public servants had not been treated rightly in the past, and were not being treated too liberally at the present time, but their position had been improved. Incidentals covered a multitude of sins. A multitude of expenses could be placed under the head, "Incidentals and Contingencies," and he hoped the Government would look into the expenditure under that head, not only in connection with the Justice Department, but also in connection with every other department. The question of gambling had also been discussed during the debate, and he made no apology for saying that he was absolutely opposed to gambling. He was absolutely opposed to the issuing of permits to gamble, even to religious and charitable institutions. Parliament decided by an Act that gambling was wrong in principal, and if gambling was wrong in principal for the individual, it was wrong for the community as a whole. It was absolute hypocrisy for an hon. member to stand up and condemn one form of gambling and allow other forms of gambling. He regretted that in the Act which was passed by Parliament power was placed in the hands of the Attorney-General to grant permits. He did not blame the Minister for Justice for issuing those permits, because he had authority to do so, and when a member came along and asked for permission to indulge in gambling in connection with charitable and religious institutions, it was exceedingly hard for him to refuse that permission. When that Act was passed, and the principal of gambling was condemned, it was absolutely wrong to place that power in the hands of the Attorney-General or anyone else, and he trusted that hon. members would realise what a pernicious thing gambling was, and what a danger it was to the community. On the one hand they were trying to protect the boys and girls—they were trying to make them better men and women—and on the other hand they were granting permits that were going to drag them down, and send them to hell itself. He absolutely opposed gambling in every respect. The Attorney-General attacked an hon. member for having his name attached to a certain paper. That attack was hardly fair, because any member might be connected with an institution a majority of the members of which might be in favour of art unions, and so forth. He had been in that position himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: If you hold those views, you ought to get out of the position.

Mr. GREEN: Not at all. He belonged to a State school committee who applied for a permit when he was absent; but he believed that by remaining on the committee he could do good for the children in the future rather than by sending in his resignation. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): The hon. member for Drayton suggested that the Government members were stonewalling the Estimates for the purpose of preventing discussion of the Railway Estimates. He had sat there all the morning, and six or seven Opposition members had spoken, and only the Minister from the Government side spoke in reply. He wanted the people of Queensland to understand that there was no stonewalling on the Government side of the House, and he, for one, wanted to see all the Estimates discussed; but he was quite satisfied that hon. members opposite did not want them discussed as they should be discussed.

The hon. member for Windsor remarked that somebody on the Government side of the House said that there was gambling in food. He was one of those who believed there was. The hon. member referred to gambling in the profits out of State stations and butchers' shops. What would have been the gamble if the people controlling the meat business were not controlled to some extent by the State? It would have cost the country some hundreds of thousands of pounds more for their food.

He was going to be honest with regard to Ministerial trips. He had been one who, during his term of nine years in the House, had accepted invitations from Ministers of the Crown to travel in different parts of Queensland, and the hon. member for Albert was a most genial gentleman in the position of Home Secretary. He invited members from both sides of the House to the Experimental Farm, to Dunwich, and other places, and there was no doubt that members, particularly the rank and file, in many instances, were to blame just as much as the Minister, because they aided and abetted the system, which was wrong.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I say it is not wrong. I say they should travel more.

Mr. GILDAY: He was one of those who believed that the time had arrived when economy in that direction should be preached; but still the practice had been in existence since there had been self-government in Queensland. When a Minister was trvelling, members wanted him to see certain places, and the result was that a certain amount of money was spent.

Mr. KERR: Quite right, too.

Mr. GILDAY: Then, why all the argument?

Mr. KERR: We want to see it put on a proper basis.

Mr. GILDAY: Members opposite had been charging Ministers with spending money and, when they got a little of their own back, they began to squeak, nothwithstanding that they had been helping to bring the expenditure about.

The Home Secretary had said definitely, in reply to the hon. member for Toowong, that he intended to deal with the gambling evils in the city.

The HOME SECRETARY: I would deal with them in five minutes if the owners of the property would let me.

Mr. GILDAY: He was coming to that point, for they were the people who were responsible. After the Home Secretary's statement, why did members bring the same thing up on another vote? Was it not for the purpose of stonewalling? Either that, or they had not been there to know what had been done.

He considered that the officers of the Justice Department were most conscientious in carrying out their work to the credit of Queensland and the satisfaction of the Minister, whoever he might be, and he was quite satisfied that the figures submitted by the Minister were correct, notwithstanding that every effort had been made to try to make them speak in a different tone. He was

sorry that the Minister did not go a little further into the matter, because he was quite satisfied he could have shown the public a good deal more. He did not suppose the discussion would make much headway for Queensland; but he was not going to criticise Ministerial trips, because he believed they were essential, and that if Ministers and members saw more of Queensland, perhaps the State would be in a better position.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): Witnesses at magisterial inquiries, who often attended at very great inconvenience, were allowed only 5s. a day expenses. That was a very small amount, and he would like the Minister to see whether it could not be increased, particularly as the vote was being raised from £450 to £700.

He was glad that the travelling allowances of judges had been cut down from £1,000 to £900, although he did not know why such a great amount needed to be paid. No doubt, there was some good reason for it.

If what they had heard about on Friday night and that morning was to be carried on at the present time, it was not going to give the people of Queensland very much confidence in Parliament. (Hear, hear!) It did not matter what past Ministers had done—that they had done wrong was no reason why a Labour Government or Labour Ministers should follow in their footsteps. No expenditure except what was justified should be incurred on Ministerial or any other trips. The bulk of the people of Queensland were not going to cavil at any Minister's visiting a district in a proper way, and seeing the people there, and practically spending money in a legitimate way; but if things were to be carried on as they had been told of by the statements of the trips that had taken place, and money was to be spent in drink, he was totally opposed to it. He did not think any money should be spent in drink at all. If people wanted drink, they ought to get it for themselves. He certainly would never stand for giving drink to people on any Ministerial trip.

He hoped that the Attorney-General and the Home Secretary would do everything possible to try and get rid of the gambling evil, which was eating the vitals out of the young people of Queensland. (Hear, hear!) He considered any form of gambling an evil. Taking "two-up" as an instance, there were "two-up" schools going on, not only during the week, but every Sunday, from daylight to dark. Thousands of pounds were going through those schools, and hundreds of young men were being ruined. If a man could spend the money without doing harm to anyone else, he could do what he liked with his money; but he frequently read reports of cases in the police court where young people were charged with embezzlement from private employers, and in some cases from the Commonwealth or State Governments, and in nearly every case they alleged that their downfall was due to gambling. Hon. members had only to go into the shops in Brisbane to hear, not only young lads, but young girls asking what horse won a certain race, and then saying that they had a ticket on some horse or other.

The HOME SECRETARY: I know a case where a man was put in gaol for embezzlement who blamed the racecourse for his downfall, but it was shown in evidence that he had built a house with the money.

Mr. GLEDSON: There might be exceptions to the general rule; but every day they had evidence placed before them of young people spending money on gambling that should have been spent in other ways. There were other forms of gambling, as hon. members on his side had pointed out. There was one form of gambling that, no doubt, the hon. member for Townsville was familiar with. How many times did they read in the papers of people selling salt and water for medicine? (Laughter.) That was one of the many forms of gambling that was doing a great deal of harm. With other hon. members, he hoped that the granting of permits would be taken out of the hands of Ministers, and that the whole system would be abolished. (Hear, hear!) Though he was opposed to gambling, and was doing everything he could to stop it, yet, as representative of a district, he had frequently to introduce deputations to the Attorney-General asking for permits for art unions or other forms of gambling.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are shirking your responsibilities.

Mr. GLEDSON: They were all open to the charge of shirking their responsibilities, but it was necessary in the carrying out of their parliamentary duties. He had often to introduce a deputation of political opponents to Ministers, but that did not necessarily say that he agreed with the views of the members of such deputations. The members of the deputations knew that he did not agree with them, but, as the representative of the district, he had to do it. He hoped that the granting of permits would be stopped entirely. The least objectionable form of gambling was the Golden Casket. There was not a great deal of harm done in connection with that, and there was not the same incentive to spend more than one could afford.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: What is the difference?

Mr. GLEDSON: The money was going to a good object, but that was its only justification. There was no doubt that gambling was doing a tremendous amount of harm. He knew of men in constant employment who were earning good money, but they practically had to sell their home, their furniture, and everything else, because of their gambling losses. The sooner they stopped the evil that led to that sort of thing the better it would be for Queensland and for the future generation.

Mr. COLLINS (*Woren*): He had always advocated that the Ministers should visit the outlying portions of the State more than they did at the present time, and he did not think that the discussion was going to do any good, although it might educate the public. From time immemorial their friends opposite had held the reins of government, and he had not known what was going on behind the scenes until a Labour Government came into power. He was satisfied that the workers outside would begin to put on their thinking caps. Although Parliament represented the wisdom of past ages, it might not be the last word in government, and it was more than likely that the workers would want to know why the late Home Secretary should spend the enormous amount of money that they were told he had spent.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I want the papers laid on the table.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member referred to him (Mr. Collins) the other night as "a political hypocrite"; he could now hurl the accusation back in the hon. gentleman's teeth. Why all this canting hypocrisy in connection with these matters? If it was the right thing for Ministers to go on these trips and spend public money, why not say so? If it was necessary for Ministers to visit the aboriginal settlements in the Gulf—he believed the hon. gentleman had visited them—why not recognise the fact? For a good many years he had listened to canting hypocrisy in that Chamber about gambling. He was sick of listening to hon. members on the other side talking about gambling, because, so long as the capitalistic system existed—that system was nothing but a huge gamble itself—so long would gambling continue. People gambled because they desired to get something that they had not earned. That was what the capitalist did. He took from the workers a portion of the wealth they produced; in other words, he took from them that which he had not earned. Any man who went to a racecourse, or threw his pennies up into the air, was just as much a capitalist as the man who took from labour the product of his labour. Each one sought to take from another that which he had not
[12.30 p.m.] earned. Capitalism was all a gamble, and gambling on a racecourse was only another method of taking wealth from individuals which had not been earned. Among the capitalists only a few men got the profits, which came from the product of labour, and in gambling only a few persons who indulged in it got the profits which they had not earned. He had no doubt that some very religious people had taken tickets in the Golden Casket. Then, why all this hypocrisy about the matter? The hon. member for Townsville owned half a dozen chemists' shops, and was engaged in one of the greatest gambles in Queensland. Yet the hon. member talked against gambling in that House. The worst gamble was the gamble in human life. He knew that people gambled every day. In his opinion, the remedy for gambling was to wipe out the whole capitalistic system, and get a better system in place of it. It was no use for members to get up in the House and pose as Simon Pures, saying that they did not believe in gambling or in the Golden Casket, as that would not cure the evil. If the Government were not to raise money by the Golden Casket, then let Parliament put a tax on the unimproved value of all lands in municipalities and shires.

Mr. BEBBINGTON interjected.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Drayton would be the very first to oppose such a proposition; but if they were to support their hospitals in outside districts they must resort to taxation for that purpose. He was not one of those who believed in gambling, but he had taken a ticket in the Golden Casket now and again. (Laughter.) He had one in his pocket now. There was no cant about that statement; it was a statement made straight out from the shoulder What he wished to point out was that, if they destroyed the present capitalistic system, they would do away with gambling of every kind.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): He had no objection to Ministers touring round the country. In fact, he believed that it was absolutely essential that they should do so, and he did not cavil at Ministers inviting members of Parliament to accompany them on visits to different parts of the State; but he contended that it was not necessary to incur all the expense which was incurred in connection with the supply of liquor. One point which had not been touched upon, although he had raised it at the beginning of this debate, was that this cost for liquor and incidentals had been incurred during an election or just prior to an election.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): As the member who originated a discussion on this matter two or three years ago, it would not be amiss if he made a few remarks on the subject now. He was not one of those who condemned gambling in its entirety. The attitude he took up was that it was wrong to break the law which controlled gambling. In the year 1895 an Act was passed for the suppression of gambling. That measure aimed at the cure of the evil which was so rampant among the populace. In the history of every community it was found that gambling was rife at various times, and he had no doubt that in 1895 the Legislature found it necessary to introduce legislation to suppress gambling. But in that legislation facilities were given to the Attorney-General to grant certain exemptions, or permits, under certain circumstances. A great deal had been said during the debate, and during a previous debate on the subject, with regard to certain patriotic movements being allowed permits for carrying on gambling. Under the Criminal Code, institutions of that description were expressly scheduled as being amongst those institutions to which the Attorney-General might grant a permit for a lottery. They knew quite well that the evil of gambling would always exist, and it might not be possible to suppress gambling entirely; but if the law with respect to the suppression of gambling was administered properly and effectively there would be much less gambling carried on than was the case at the present time. The result was that year after year they read pathetic utterances from the Commissioner of Police, where he said that, in spite of his attempts to suppress gambling, the evil was on the increase. That simply meant that, if the Commissioner were permitted to give frank expression to his views, he would say that so long as the Government indulged in the practice of gambling to bolster up their newspapers and political fighting funds, so long would he be unable to cure the evil. The hon. member for Bowen got up and made a tirade against the capitalistic system and suchlike nonsense, which they were in the habit of listening to from that hon. gentleman lately. That hon. gentleman missed the mark entirely. They knew that the whole foundation on which the community rested was one in which existed some form or other of gambling. Everyone had latent in himself the desire to gamble in some form or other. They did not pose as Simon Pures, but the desire to gamble was latent in all. Owing to that weakness, and owing to the frailties of human nature, it was necessary to have some curb to prevent certain forms of gambling, and they had it in the Suppression of Gambling Act. If Ministers would only carry out that Act, members would not have to be continually raising the question. The hon. member for Ipswich, for the first time in this House, condemned the system of gambling which existed in Queens-

land to-day. Why did he not do it two or three years before, when the question was first raised by members of the Opposition? Why did not the hon. member for Ipswich bring his influence to bear on his party and suppress the gambling that was indulged in for the benefit of the "Standard" and political organisations? While these organisations received the benefit of the proceeds from gambling, the hon. member for Ipswich sat silent and said nothing. Probably the hon. member's electorate organisation received some of the benefits and had been fed on the proceeds of gambling. The hon. member for Ipswich saw the signs of the times, and he got up and condemned gambling. The hon. member for Bowen talked about hypocrisy. Why did he not talk to the hon. member for Ipswich, who sat on his right? The hon. member for Ipswich allowed the gambling evil to exist for two years and said nothing, but finally woke up to the fact that it was necessary to point the finger of scorn at the Government. They knew that the gambling evil had existed for years, yet the Government sheltered themselves behind those who indulged in gambling in a pardonable and lawful way for the benefit of the various patriotic funds in Queensland. During the debate on gambling the hon. member for Cook asked why the Opposition did not point the finger of scorn at the Golden Casket Art Union. He (Mr. Elphinstone) had no objection to the Golden Casket Art Union, whilst it was the means of making people contribute to the hospitals who otherwise would never contribute anything. He had not raised his voice in condemnation of it because something like £170,000 was raised annually for hospital purposes. He knew that the great majority of the people did not invest in the Golden Casket for the purpose of helping the hospitals, but because they thought it was an easy way to get rich quick without working for it. When speaking on the gambling evil in a previous session, he referred to the fact that by paying a certain sum they could gamble on the names of certain politicians. For instance, if a person paid 1s. and drew Mr. T. J. Ryan he would get 10s. He presumed the present Attorney-General would be worth 1s. (Laughter.) After listening to that hon. gentleman's oration on Friday night, he (Mr. Elphinstone) would put down his value at 3d. He had never listened to a more undignified utterance from a Minister of the Crown, and he seriously hoped that it would be the last time they would have an exhibition of that sort. He congratulated the hon. member for Ipswich for having the pluck to get up after three years of pounding from the Opposition side of the House and frankly condemn gambling as an evil. The only thing the Minister could say in reply was that members sitting in opposition had applied to him for permits to run gambling shows for patriotic purposes; but the hon. gentleman had failed to justify his actions in utilising the gambling process for bolstering up their own political organisations. The gambling instinct was gaining ground by leaps and bounds in Queensland. If they walked down Elizabeth street they would find bookmaking being carried on in the street. He supposed that he looked like a gentleman who patronised the racecourse, and probably that accounted for the fact that when he was walking up Elizabeth street he was stopped by a man in the open street and offered certain odds on a race. That sort of thing was possible because the Government, with the condonance of the Minister for Justice, was perpetually breaking the law—because he thought that accumulating money for political purposes was of more importance than the welfare of the community. (Hear, hear!)

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL rose to reply to some of the matters raised by hon. members opposite.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: More stonewalling.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He was not stonewalling, but thought that when members asked for information he should give it to them. The hon. member for Townsville asked the reason for the increase in the vote for contingencies. That was due to the increased cost of stationery, printing, postage, telegrams, and railway fares. Everything had gone up in price, and that accounted for the increase. The hon. member for Ipswich referred to the reduction in the amount for the judges. That was due to the fact that last year they did not expend the amount appropriated, and the vote was reduced commensurate with the reduced expenditure. The hon. member for Ipswich also wanted some information about the payments to witnesses for magisterial inquiries. They were paid different rates in the South, Centre, and North. Witnesses residing within 5 miles of the court were paid 5s. in the South, 7s. in the Centre, and 10s. in the North. Those who resided beyond 5 miles received 9s. in the South, 10s. in the Centre, and 11s. in the North. Those who resided 20 miles from the court received 10s. in the South, 11s. in the Centre, and 12s. in the North for each day. The rates had been substantially increased during recent years. He would reply to the uncalled-for remarks of the hon. member for Oxley. That hon. member got up in the House and with a supercilious air assumed the role of a dictator and of moral mentor. The hon. member for Oxley ridiculed gambling, yet he was one of the champion gamblers of Queensland himself. The gambling in some of the companies with which that hon. member was associated was more of a discredit to Queensland or a section of the people than any other form of gambling one could describe. If the hon. gentleman wished to adhere to the principles which he expounded in the House, or if he believed in them, why did he apply for permits? He had applied for a permit for gambling in connection with France's Day and for other permits. He (the Attorney-General) did not wish to call the hon. member uncharitable names, but if he persisted in his arrogant manner and the making of uncalled-for remarks he would tell him a few things that he would wish he had never heard.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You say it outside.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He would say it outside after he had said it in the House.

Question put and passed.

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—That £2,000 be granted for "Court of Industrial Arbitration." It would be noticed that there was a decrease of £1,000

in the vote. The other £1,000 had been paid as judge of the District Court.

Question put and passed.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—That £52,330 be granted for "Courts of Petty Sessions."

Mr. VOWLES: He would like to refer the Committee to an article which appeared in "The State Service" of August, 1920, under the heading of "Generic Group 5." It applied to the salaries paid to certain officers, amongst them being police magistrates, wardens, clerks of petty sessions, and mining registrars. The article, which he would like to see in "Hansard," if the Committee would agree to it to save his reading it, pointed out that those classes of officers had their salaries reduced. In 1914 the salary of the police magistrate in Brisbane was reduced to £650, whereas in 1896 it was £700. Showing that there had been no corresponding increase for the higher cost of living, in 1920 his salary was £580, being £70 less than it was in 1914. The article went on to show that if the same basis had been adopted for increased salaries to that class of officer as was granted by the Arbitration Court to ordinary workers, his salary should be up to £900. The article contained a schedule setting out the salaries of police magistrates throughout the State, and in every instance the salary in 1914 was considerably less than it was in 1896; and in 1920, when it was admitted that the cost of living had risen fully 100 per cent., they were receiving £20 less than they were paid fifteen years previously. What applied to one section of the community applied to all. A police magistrate, particularly outside of Brisbane and in the Northern and country towns, had a social position which had to be kept up. To his mind their salary was altogether too small, considering the duties and responsibilities of office. A police magistrate was regarded as the highest position to which an officer in that particular department could succeed, and it was not much of a blue ribbon for men required to pass the necessary examination, to study law, and to make themselves acquainted with all classes of procedure. There was very little inducement for people in the future if their experience was going to be the same as that of the police magistrate of the present day—namely, after years of service, they had first of all to suffer a decrease in salary and then when the time came that they should be treated in the same way as the ordinary worker—put on a reasonable basis in respect of cost of living—they should be left standing with a less salary than they received fifteen years previously.

The same thing—he thought it just as well to say it on that vote—applied to judges of the District Courts. Their salary of £1,000 was considered sufficient when the District Court was established, but it was altogether too little for the present day, and was not a fitting remuneration for gentlemen having to occupy such positions.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) would like to say a few words to supplement the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in connection with the important duties carried out by police magistrates. He considered they were underpaid. They would find, on referring to the classification reports, that Mr. Story, the Public Service Commissioner, in determining the classification, stated—

> "In determining the classification of the various positions, I have kept the following main points in view, but numerous other points of detail have been weighed according to the position under consideration:—
>
> (iv.) Police magistrates, wardens, clerks of petty sessions, mining registrars.—Judicial nature of the work which involves in greater or less degree, according to the actual position held, a knowledge of law, of Acts, regulations, rulings, precedents, etc.; duties as industrial magistrates; volume and diversity of work and administrative responsibilities; necessity for providing law and general reference books; extent to which these officers are consulted by the public; general conditions of service; qualifying examinations which have now to be passed; miscellaneous duties."

The duties which a police magistrate had to perform involved great responsibility. In addition to the ordinary Police Court work, cases in connection with small debts claims involving thousands of pounds had to be adjudicated upon by police magistrates. He would like to refer to the Police Report for the year ended June, 1920, particularly that portion dealing with criminal investigation cases. Page 5 of that report showed that the police magistrates handled 430 criminal investigation cases, of which 322 resulted in Police Court convictions, twenty-eight discharged, the remainder being Supreme Court and District Court convictions. On page 11 it showed that, in cases involving eighty-two classes of offences, 5,614 offences were decided in connection with males and 1,169 in connection with females. Those had all been before the court under arrest, while on police summons there were 578 males and twenty-three females. The police magistrates were very much underpaid when their very important duties were considered. He would instance the case of the Brisbane police magistrate, who was down at £600.

(*Sittings suspended from* 1 *p.m. to* 2 *p.m.*)

Mr. KING: Ten years ago, when Mr. Ranking was police magistrate in Brisbane, he was getting £700 a year. He quite agreed with the remarks of the leader of the Opposition in regard to country police magistrates. They were looked upon as the chief men in the town in which they resided—everyone going to them for advice; and he submitted that their services ought to be more adequately recognised. He knew that, at the present time, when they were called upon to practice rigid financial economy, it was not the time to ask for an increase of salary, but these police magistrates had been labouring for some considerable time under a disadvantage which should not be allowed to continue for a moment longer than was absolutely necessary. Their work was never finished. They had the spectacle the other night of a police magistrate having to form a midnight court for the purpose of giving bail. They performed most responsible duties, involving not only the giving of decisions in connection with claims amounting to many thousands of pounds, but also matters involving the personal liberty and

freedom of the subject. He hoped that the Government would, at the earliest possible opportunity, take into consideration the claims of these men, and give them the salary to which they were entitled.

Mr. GREEN: He endorsed the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, and other hon. members, with regard to police magistrates, who were certainly receiving an inadequate salary. It had been stated that the local authorities were not paying their clerks sufficient, but compared with the police magistrates they were far more favourably situated. There was one anomaly which he would like the Minister to clear up—that was the position at Mackay. The police magistrate got £325, and the clerk of petty sessions £365.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He is over the age limit, and is due for retirement.

Mr. GREEN: That was all the information he asked for.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In reply to the leader of the Opposition and other Opposition members, he desired to say that he recognised the responsibile duties of police magistrates. They had now afforded them an opportunity of approaching the Arbitration Court for an increased rate of payment, and hoped that they would be able to make out a good case and have justice meted out to them by the judge of the Arbitration Court. He had replied to the hon. member for Townsville, by interjection, that the reason for the anomaly which existed at Mackay was because the police magistrate was due for retirement, and they could not increase the salary of an officer who was due for retirement.

Question put and passed.

DISTRICT COURTS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—That £10,964 be granted for "District Courts."

Mr. VOWLES: When they were debating this vote last session, he made reference to the remuneration paid to Crown Prosecutors, namely, one at £450, and two at £400.

The TREASURER: They have the right of private practice.

Mr. VOWLES: The man who had to follow up the courts in the country had not much to look forward to in the way of private practice. He noticed that the Government had retired Mr. Drake, the Crown Prosecutor, who was a gentleman he had come into contact with pretty frequently in the West. He really could not understand the necessity for retiring a man like Mr. Drake. He presumed it would be on account of age. He did not think it was possible for the department to have a more capable and experienced officer than Mr. Drake, who was regarded as the most solid prosecutor they had ever had in the country. He was a man who had the respect of the community.

Mr. COLLINS: He was very shifty when he was in politics.

Mr. VOWLES: Was that the reason?

The TREASURER: No. He was retired four years ago, but was then reappointed.

Mr. VOWLES: He did not suggest that a man should be recognised because he had been associated with politics, which appeared to be the suggestion of the hon. member for Bowen.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: No such suggestion came from the hon. member for Bowen. It is a contemptible insinuation, and it can only come from a contemptible mind.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes, it came from the hon. member's friend on the left, who suggested politics. Mr. Drake was a man who had the respect of the public and the profession, and he must have the respect of the department. His work could not be better done than it was done, and he would like to know why he had been retired.

Mr. WEIR: The same thing applies to railway engineers, lengthsmen, and navvies, but you are not squealing about them.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not a question of retrenchment. They had to get somebody else to do Mr. Drake's work. When you had a competent man, why retrench him?

Mr. WEIR: You do not squeal when it comes to the bottom dog.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not a question of the bottom dog. It was not a question of retrenchment, because some person had to do the work, and they could not get a man who would do it better, although they might possibly get one who would do it as well as Mr. Drake. It was a mistake to get rid of men who had years of experience behind them, and who were fitted to do their work. He had frequently seen junior Crown Prosecutors—he admitted that they had to get experience—going into country courts, but their experience was very limited and was noticed by the general public. When they had seasoned men of such experience as Mr. Drake, they should retain them as long as their experience was available to the community.

The TREASURER: We have not been unkind to him.

Mr. VOWLES: He knew the hon. gentleman had not. He did not come under the Public Service Act, and his appointment was during good behaviour, and there was no suggestion that Mr. Drake had not fulfilled that requirement. He had no "axe to grind" in the matter, but he thought the department had not been wise in retiring a good officer with whom they were satisfied, and for whom the public had a very great respect.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He wanted to assure the leader of the Opposition that they recognised fully that Mr. Drake was an able and faithful officer. He had been retired for the reason that they found they could do the work with one prosecutor less, and he, being over the age, of course had to go. They proposed now that Mr. Ross should combine the work of the Supreme and District Courts in the North. It had been found that he could quite easily cover that work. They regretted the necessity had arisen for dispensing with Mr. Drake's services. There would be one prosecutor less on the Estimates next year; no other man was taking Mr. Drake's place.

Mr. VOWLES: Another matter he would like to refer to was the remuneration paid to bailiffs. They received a retainer of £40 a year. It was a very hard thing to get a reliable man as a bailiff in country towns. It was not an enviable position. Out of the £40 they were supposed to serve District Court summonses. The distances were great,

and a man had to go to a fair amount of expense and loss of time to carry out that one function three times a year. They were dependent on mileage and service fees, and similar payments. At Dalby they were able to retain a man only because he had been made Inspector of Shops and Factories, bringing him in an additional emolument of £40 a year. A little while ago he noticed in the papers that a deputation had waited on the Minister in respect of this matter, and he had promised to give them some consideration. They pointed out to him that this £40 was fixed as being suitable about thirty years ago, and they showed the huge difference to-day in the value of money. If the hon. gentleman did not do anything on the present vote, he hoped he would be able to find the means of putting them in a better position when the Supplementary Estimates came along. He was speaking from a knowledge extending over twenty years in the country, and he could say that if they totalled up the whole of the fees they would find that not one bailiff in the whole of Queensland was getting what they regarded as a living wage. They could not expect a man to accept an office which was not bringing in a reasonable wage. He suggested that the £40 should be made £80. That would make all the difference.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): He thought the £40 a year was little enough, and it was high time some increase was made in the matter. He could not see why there should be any differential treatment in the matter. If an officer at Dalby could get an additional £40, he did not see why bailiffs in other parts could not get the same treatment. He entered his earnest protest against any such thing. The bailiff at Ipswich should get the same treatment.

Mr. VOWLES: He is a great friend of yours.

Mr. COOPER: He would like to be a great friend to the lot, and see they all got some additional remuneration. The £40 was not good enough five or six years ago, and it ought not to be good enough to-day. As a matter of fact, they had been led from year to year to believe that some increase would be given to them. Promises had been made for the last four years, and it was high time that something was done.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He had received a deputation from bailiffs during the present year. He had promised to give some consideration to their case, and he had done so. Had it not been for the fact that the session was a very brief one, he had intended to have some alteration made in the law to enable them to collect increased fees. They felt they could not give them more than a retaining fee. They were only part-time officers, and were in a rather anomalous position, as they found it difficult to get other work; but that was not the fault of the Government. In view of the fact that everything cost more to-day, it would be a fair thing if bailiffs got a little more in the way of fees. He was prepared to consider favourably the question of so amending the law as to enable the bailiffs to collect increased fees.

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—That £32,965 be granted for "Electoral Registration."

Mr. MACGREGOR (*Merthyr*) thought this vote was one of the most important they had to consider. It was rather surprising to find it in the Department of Justice, because he noticed the Elections Act said it had to be administered by the Home Secretary or by the Minister for the time being discharging that office; showing that its administration by any other Minister was meant to be merely of a temporary nature. Of course, one would expect to find it in the Department of Justice, because the administration of the Department of Justice was supposed to be of greater precision and accuracy than any other department. He was afraid they had not got that. It had been stated by one man, who had studied the roll, that the administration of the Department of Justice must have been based on a misinterpretation of an old saying that justice was blind, and anyone who relied upon that department would find that justice had one eye; because they found that on 23rd and 27th August this year, at a time when it was in doubt whether Parliament was to meet again, letters were sent out by the hon. member for Flinders, who held the office of Attorney-General now, to Labour members only, in connection with the polling-booths. They were as follows:—

> "For your personal information I forward herewith in duplicate list of polling places as gazetted at the State elections held in March, 1918. Certain deletions from and additions to this list have been suggested as shown in red ink.
>
> "Will you please mark on one of these forms any suggested alterations you may deem necessary and return to me at your earliest convenience, but not later than one week before nomination day.
>
> "I am also furnishing the names of presiding officers and poll clerks who acted at last elections, together with proposed alterations."

The letter on the 27th August, in connection with the annual roll, he was informed was posted to Labour members only, and not to members of the Opposition at that time. To show that the Justice Department was not possessed of that precision and accuracy that one would expect, he would quote some figures in connection with the electoral rolls. On the State roll in 1915 there were 335,195 electors on the roll. In 1918, three years afterwards, there were 424,416. That was, in three war years there was an increase of 81,000 on the State roll. In the next two and a-half years there was an increase of about 31,000, the number on the roll at the last election being 455,728. If they took the Commonwealth roll, they would find that the figures for 1915 were 363,298, and in December, 1919, the number on the rolls was 390,364, so that there were 35,000 more on the Commonwealth roll in 1915 than there was on the State roll, and at the last election, in 1920, there were, as had been pointed out several times, 65,000 more electors on the State roll than there were on the Commonwealth roll. How that increase had come about it was very difficult to ascertain.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is a very easy matter to explain.

Mr. MACGREGOR: He was beginning to think so himself, and he thought it was to be explained by negligence either on the part of the Government or on the part of the

electoral officers, because he knew, in regard to the electorate he represented, that in about three or four months they were able to find out exactly the state of the Merthyr roll, and he saw no reason why the Government by the same means, and with the greater command of the public purse, could not in a few months accurately determine the state of the rolls. He noticed there had been constant complaints about the state of the rolls, and in Merthyr it was only a case of going round the electorate on a house-to-house visitation when it was found that there were 1,690 people on the roll who could not be found in the electorate. Of those, 941 did not vote. On a comparison of the Commonwealth roll it was found that there were 1,128 on the Merthyr roll who had been transferred years ago. The alert department of the Commonwealth had been able to keep their roll clean. On election day he came across a man who was on the Merthyr roll twice, and had been so in 1918. In 1918 he only voted once, but he subsequently got a notice from the Electoral Office asking why he did not vote.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Did you find any actual cases of double voting?

Mr. MACGREGOR: Three, and one was a union secretary.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It was only apparent, you could not prove it.

Mr. MACGREGOR: There were only three cases of apparent double voting. He was willing to admit that, so far as he could see there was no fear of corruption or anything of that sort. It was simply negligence. It was a great mistake to have on the roll a number of names under which people could vote, as it opened the door to abuse. No Government should, for a moment, leave itself open to the charges that were made in regard to the condition of the State rolls. There was another elector who was on three rolls. He was on Paddington roll, Brisbane roll, and Toowong roll, and could have voted in any one of them, and he did vote in one. They could easily adopt a system whereby the rolls could be kept up to date and as accurate as possible. To have an accurate register of the people who were entitled to vote was one of the most important functions of the Government. The negligence in connection with the rolls created a scandal, and there were three scandals which the Government should get rid of as soon as possible; there was the scandal of the rolls, the scandal of the electorates, and the scandal of representation by minority.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): The hon. member for Merthyr spoke about the door being open to abuse, and the hon. member for Townsville, who was leader of the Northern Country party, and his secretary, Mr. Bradley, wanted to leave the door open to a man getting no vote at all on election day. A gentleman who was on the Eacham roll for the State went across to Chillagoe to do a temporary job. Mr. Bradley, on what authority he did not know, wrote that gentleman telling him that if he did not strike his name off the Eacham roll and enrol on Chillagoe, he would be prosecuted. That was the method used by the National party. It was far better that people should be on some roll twice than not on at all. The people were just as honest as members of Parliament and were not likely to abuse their privileges. In the olden days men walked many miles to record their votes, and then found that their names had been struck off the roll. Evidently that was the position the Opposition wanted to get back into. Not long ago an elector had to sign a declaration, but now a man could get a vote so long as he knew he was on a roll and had not shifted from the district.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS interjected.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member's organisation tried to bludgeon people into removing their names from the roll so that on election day they might bluff them through their scrutineers by telling them they had to sign an affidavit. The leaders and organisers of the National party would stoop to any means to get names off the roll and the hon. member for Pittsworth, who had been organising the farmers, would stoop to anything to get a Labour man off the roll. Then he came down here and prated that the only man who should be on the roll was the farmer. And if the Opposition got their way the nomad would not have a vote. They had heard most scurrilous attacks made on the working classes of the State by the leader and the deputy leader and members on the front benches of the Opposition.

Mr. CORSER: No leader or deputy leader ever attacked them.

Mr. RIORDAN: Well, their Ministry, the members of their caucus, and the hon. member in particular had abused the nomad of the State—even their leader and deputy leader. They abused the nomads so that they should not have a vote in local authority matters, and in olden days they used the same argument against their having a vote in the election of members of the Assembly. The hon. member for Merthyr kicked up a row about what had happened in Merthyr—he would far sooner see a man off the roll who was opposed to him than on the roll. He said that a man had been on the roll for Toowong, Paddington, and Brisbane, but he only voted once. The hon. member for Merthyr, who was used to digging up mud—the mudraking member for Merthyr—was prepared to make attacks on the workers of Queensland by saying that a union secretary voted twice. (Opposition dissent.) It might have been a secretary of his organisation, but not the secretary of any organisation of any repute—of any decent working-class organisation.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*) wished to supplement the remarks of the hon. member for Merthyr. He thought it was purely negligence that allowed the rolls to be in the awful state in which they were. When they put in an organiser in the Port Curtis electorate, a man who was known to everyone and who knew the electorate very well himself, they discovered that 700 persons were on the roll who did not reside there. Some were dead, and some had left many years before. Although they tried every means in their power they succeeded in getting only a few off. He was rather afraid before the election on account of the presence of these names on the roll, but in not one instance was advantage taken of them in plural voting or otherwise. He did not say there was any bad motive behind the condition of the rolls, but thought it was pure negligence on the part of the Government or the Electoral Office. The Government, being in charge, should remedy the situation, and if the Minister for Justice did nothing else than clear up the matter he would be doing a great service to the country.

As to the remarks of the hon. member for Burke, he could only say that he did not know what he was talking about. He referred to an isolated case that occurred up North—he did not know whether it happened or not—but it was ridiculous to say it was happening all over Queensland, for he knew it was not a fact.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): A good deal of money had been spent, and it was the duty of the department to see that it was spent well and in the direction of obtaining the cleanest rolls possible. He had always maintained that the first essential to clean politics was clean rolls. The hon. member for Burke had said that organisers had endeavoured by every means in their power to get men struck off the rolls. As a matter of fact, their organisers had been employed to endeavour to get men off the rolls whose names were put there illegally, because they had not served their one month's residence. Just prior to the last election, the Government adopted many ruses for capturing many electorates, and in the Burrum they adopted the method usual to them of placing regrading gangs on work that really was not warranted—for instance, at Doolbi, on the Isis Range.

The TREASURER: Do you not want regrading up there?

Mr. BRAND: The work could have been left undone for the time being.

The TREASURER: They did not have time to get on the roll.

Mr. BRAND: No, not according to the Act, but they got on; and it was well known that the idea of sending them to Doolbi was to secure votes for the Labour candidate. Why had the gangs been taken away since the election? The Minister for Railways told him, in answer to a question, that two local men were put on and the other men were brought from Bundaberg and Maryborough, because unemployment was more acute there. The gang came to Childers by special train, much less than twenty-eight days before the 10th September, which was the last day on which claims for enrolment might be made, yet some of them secured enrolment on the Burrum roll.

Mr. BARBER: The statement was made, but it has never been proved.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The same thing has been said about Herbert, but the hon. member knocked that skyhigh.

Mr. BRAND: He would prove his statement in his own time. They had on their roll furteen names which appeared on the Bundaberg roll.

Mr. PEASE: Where did they vote?

Mr. BRAND: Numbers of them voted in the Burrum electorate.

Mr. PEASE: Did they vote for any other electorate?

Mr. BRAND: What he was objecting to was that their names were placed on the Burrum roll before they fulfilled the residential qualification. There were two men whose names were on the Burrum roll who were also enrolled for Wide Bay, and twelve whose names were also on the Maryborough roll. Those were men who were on the Doolbi regrading gang. In the sugar industry numbers of men came from all parts of Australia to harvest the crop, and many of them wrote to various employers in the Burrum electorate asking for work, and they also got their names on the Burrum roll before they fulfilled their one month's residential qualification. He had a number of letters from men who wanted work in the canefields. Six men left Cooroy on 29th August and arrived in the Burrum electorate seeking employment on 30th August. They went to Mr. F. R. Brand, an agent for the employers, who engaged them on 30th August to go canecutting in the Isis district. Yet on 10th September they were enrolled for Burrum, although they had practically only been in the district eleven days.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: These are only your statements.

Mr. BRAND: He could prove it. Those men left Cooroy on 29th August, and twelve days later they were enrolled for the Burrum; also, the following letter was written on 17th August by a man named T. Braden:—

"Brisbane, 17th August, 1920.

"Sir,—Seeing a paragraph in one of the papers that there is room for two or three more gangs, I can manage a gang of five or six, or more if required, having had six years' experience at Mossman, Herbert River, etc.

"Kindly reply at earliest convenience, letting me know if I am in time, and what number of men to bring.

"Your faithfully,

"T. BRADEN,

"Room No. 10, Trades Hall,

"Brisbane."

Those men were enrolled for the Burrum on 10th September, with the exception of T. Braden. The following letter was from Sydney:—

"Harris street, 14th June, 1920.

"To the Manager,

"Dear Sir,—Learning that you will shortly be starting your crushing season, I beg to offer myself for the incoming season. I have been with the Colonial Sugar Refinery Com. this last three seasons as platform driver. I hold first-class ticket. I got good references from that company. Hoping you will be able to consider my application,

"I remain, etc.,

ROBERT MCGILTON,

"31 Harris street, Pyrmont, Sydney,

"N.S.W."

The manager of the Doolbi mill replied to that letter on 19th June, and on 19th July, 1920, McGilton wrote from Dundoo, viâ South Grafton, New South Wales:—

"To the Manager.

"Dear Sir,—I regret that I cannot send you a copy of my references, as I sent them to Brisbane about three months ago to the inspector, Mr. Henderson, when I put in to sit for my first-class ticket. I got notice about eight weeks ago that I had passed my examination by Mr. Howitt, inspector, of Warwick, Queensland. The reason I am leaving here I have to cook my tucker; it makes a very long day on your feet. The mill is in the bush. The reason I did not go back to Goondi this season I feel in better health down South. My age is thirty-nine.

"I am discharged soldier, Australian Imperial Force; character good; sir, if you require me I must get my references

when I am going through Brisbane from the inspector. I can go any time when you require me."

A reply was sent to that on 26th July, and on 3rd August this letter was sent to him—

"Will reserve a job for you when we start. The Cane Prices Board fixed October for the time of starting. I am unable to give you work until we do start. Should you get more suitable employment before that time, please advise me as early as possible. I shall look upon you as engaged for the season unless I hear from you."

On 9th August, McGilton sent the following telegram from Brisbane—

"Manager Doolbi Sugar Mill, Childers. Arrived here, can you place me; reply paid."

The manager sent the following wire in reply—

"Can give you employment for a time at driving when crushing starts."

That man also was enrolled on 10th September.

The TREASURER: We are quite as much against that kind of thing as you are.

Mr. BRAND: Then why did the Government not take steps to stop it? When the crushing started he arrived, and within a fortnight his name was placed on the Burrum roll. Then, here was a letter from another man—

"7th August, 1920.

"Hotel Pacifique, Tweed Heads, N.S.W.

"The Manager, Doolbi Sugar Mill.

"Dear Sir,—In reply to your letter, I will accept the job on the top clutch. Please let me know the date the mill begins crushing.

"S. FRENCH."

That letter was replied to on 14th August, yet on 10th September French was enrolled for the Burrum.

Mr. RIORDAN: You brought those men there.

Mr. BRAND: He was not complaining about who brought the men there. His complaint was that they got their names on the roll in contravention of the Act.

The TREASURER: Who do you suggest is at fault—the electoral registrar?

Mr. BRAND: Yes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Those men must have made a declaration regarding their residence qualification.

Mr. BRAND: The Country party organisation objected on 10th September to the electoral registrar in Childers to the enrolment of those men, because they considered they were not entitled to enrolment, not having put in one month's residence, and he believed that the officer in Childers had instructions from the head office in Brisbane that the men had to be enrolled.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What reason have you for thinking that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is a serious reflection on the Principal Electoral Officer.

Mr. BRAND: He thought that the electoral officer must be acting under instructions because the Labour party had an organiser at work in the electorate who practically admitted it. Here was another letter—

"Maryborough,

"18th August, 1920.

"To Manager.

"In reply to you for the position as fugal hand, as I was at the Tugales last crushing, I apply for same, trusting, sir, my letter you will oblige.

"I am, sir, etc.,

"WALTER JONES."

A reply was sent on 19th August, yet that man was enrolled on 10th September.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you get these letters from the maanger of the mill?

Mr. BRAND: Yes.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Those letters show that the Labour Government did not bring those men there.

Mr. BRAND: He was not blaming the Labour Government for bringing the men there. He was blaming them for allowing them to get on the roll without first fulfilling the one month's residence qualification. So far as the Country party's organisation was concerned, they took fine care to lodge objections against the enrolment of those men, because they knew very well that they had not been in the electorate for a month.

He also wished to raise the objection that returning officers should not be given instructions by the department as to who shall be appointed presiding officers at an election. He believed the returning officer in his electorate was told that certain persons were to be appointed as presiding officers, and those persons were appointed to the detriment of school teachers. He held that when a presiding officer was to be appointed a school teacher should have the first preference, but the department had instructed the returning officer that men of known Labour sympathies should be appointed to those positions.

The HOME SECRETARY: A presiding officer must have some political views.

Mr. BRAND: Yes, but a presiding officer should not be a person who had taken an active interest in the elections. It would be far better to appoint to such a position a man who had not taken an active part in the election, and a fit person for a presiding officer was a school master, if he was otherwise qualified. He hoped that in future the department would endeavour to see that impartial men, who could not be charged with using political influence, were appointed to such positions. In any case, the appointment of presiding officers should be left to the discretion of the returning officer.

Mr. COLLINS: How many people voted twice in your electorate?

Mr. BRAND: He was not going to say.

Mr. COLLINS: How many cases of impersonation were there?

Mr. BRAND: He had no concrete knowledge of other than one case, and that was a case of double voting. He hoped that the Minister would take up this matter of claims, and see that in future no one got on the roll before he performed the qualifications of residence prescribed by the Act.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: With reference to the election of Merthyr, he was sure that the Committee were pleased to have the assurance of the hon. member for Merthyr

that there was nothing particularly wrong in connection with that electorate in that respect. Queensland was told by the daily Press that the state of affairs in connection with the Merthyr and Maree electorates was particularly bad, and he wished to place on record in "Hansard" what was said by the Press in that regard, so that the statements might appear side by side with the statement of the hon. member for Merthyr to the effect that such reports were not true. There had been no apology made in regard to those statements. Some newspapers were careful to use the word "alleged," as if that would give them some protection for making a misstatement. The "Daily Mail" of 14th October printed a paragraph, with the following headings in large type:—

> "Dead Men Vote. Grave Charges. The Maree Contest. 138 Duplicate Registrations."

Then the report said—

> "In connection with the polling in Maree, a most extraordinary state of affairs has been disclosed as a result of a check made in the booths throughout the electorate. An elaborate system was utilised for keeping tally of the votes cast, and it was as a result of this check that the following list of votes—the majority of which are, to say the least, doubtful—was made:—
>
> "Deleted, but allowed to vote, 12, votes affected, 12; deleted, but voted twice, 2, votes affected, 4; dead, but voted, 2, votes affected, 2; voted twice, 138, votes affected, 138."

The hon. member for Merthyr had assured them that afternoon that there were only three in the Merthyr electorate. Then the report went on to say—

> "Voted three times, 6, votes affected, 12; voted four times, 3, votes affected, 2; absent, but voted once in the electorate, 1, votes affected, 1; absent, but voted twice in the electorate, 2, votes affected, 2; challenged votes, 3, votes affected, 3; in another State, but voted, 1, votes affected, 1. Total votes affected, 184."

Those were the statements made with regard to the election at Maree, and similar statements were made with regard to other places throughout Queensland. It was about time that something was done to make people substantiate statements of that kind when publishing them in the Press. He was told confidentially that in his electorate there were something like 123 electors who voted twice, but when the list was examined it was found that in at least eleven cases the so-called record of voting twice was a mistake on the part of the poll clerk in recording the number. However, he had stated what was the report concerning the condition of affairs at Maree, and he thought that something should be done to provide that such grave charges should not be made unless they could be substantiated.

Mr. FRY: He had nothing to say against the way in which his election was carried out by the returning officer and his assistants. He wished, however, to point out that his opponent approached the Electoral Office and requested a polling-booth to be appointed at Upper Melbourne street, and that that request was granted. After his opponent told him that he was applying to have a polling-booth established at Upper Melbourne street, the next thing he knew was a notice appearing in the "Government Gazette," appointing Upper Melbourne street as a polling-booth. The returning officer made no recommendation for the appointment of that place as a polling-booth until after it had been made to the department by his opponent, and there was no time for him to object to its proclamation as a polling-booth. He (Mr. Fry) did not approve of that, because he did not know what his game was. On the night of the election, when the results were being made known, and when his opponent had a lead of three votes, his opponent said to him that he had shown him a point by getting a polling-booth at Upper Melbourne street.

[3 p.m.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Do you know that that polling-booth was granted on the advice of the returning officer?

Mr. FRY: Not until afterwards. The Under Secretary was present, and he challenged the Minister or Under Secretary to prove that the returning officer asked for a polling-booth for Upper Melbourne street before the request was made by his opponent. As a matter of fact, he spoke to the returning officer and asked him whether he had recommended the polling-booth, but the returning officer would not answer.

Mr. STOPFORD: Why did you ask the returning officer? Why did you not go to the department? You were trying to intimidate the returning officer.

Mr. FRY: He was the sitting member, and he should have been advised of what was going on and what was intended. It was an easy matter to telephone to him. He (Mr. Fry) wanted a polling-booth in another part of the electorate, but that did not suit his opponent. He was not going to make any personal remarks about his opponent, but he should have been told what was going on. The returning officer had since been discharged from the Government service, and probably he would make a statement on the matter now.

Mr. STOPFORD: What is your complaint—that your opponent had the right to nominate a polling-booth? There is no complaint in that.

Mr. FRY: He did not know whether there was or not, but his opponent told him that he had worked a point on him. His opponent thought he had won the election then; but he (Mr. Fry) beat him by 716 votes, and his opponent was now going strong in the Government service.

Mr. PEASE: Whom do you want to sack?

Mr. FRY: He did not want to sack anybody, but the Minister should show more courtesy to a sitting member.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you say that a sitting member is the only one who has a right to nominate a polling place?

Mr. FRY: The sitting member had a right to know what was going on. The people who supported members opposite voted early and often when they got the chance, but the people who supported the Opposition could not very often get to the polls at all. He knew that his opponent objected to a polling place on Highgate Hill, because of the majority that would be given for the Nationalist candidate there, whereas if it had been a wet day he (Mr. Fry) might have lost fifty votes through the people being

unable to vote. He had no fault to find with the returning officer for the work he carried out at the election, or the police for the way they did their work. He would make a recommendation about the department later on.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Send it along and it will receive consideration.

Mr. FRY thanked the Minister and said if he granted his request he would be pleased.

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): There had been a lot of discussion about the names of voters who had been left off the rolls, but hon. members knew that people who had their names on the rolls for years had them removed by the Federal Government. Under the Local Authorities Bill members opposite complained about the nomad being given a vote because there should be no representation without taxation, but they knew that, so far as the present Federal Government were concerned, it was a case of taxation without representation for a good many honourable Queensland citizens. He (Mr. Cooper) always trusted the returning officer and other officials in charge of the election in his electorate, because he was unable to be at every polling booth himself.

Mr. COSTELLO: What about your agents?

Mr. W. COOPER: He did not have sufficient money like his opponent to place agents everywhere.

At eight minutes past 3 o'clock p.m.,

Mr. DUNSTAN took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. W. COOPER: He did not squeal because a lot of names were left off the Rosewood roll. He did not say that he would have got all those votes, but he thought he would have got as many as his opponent. In many cases he knew that they would vote for members opposite, because they would have the means to induce electors to vote the way they wanted. When they squealed about the elections it was reflecting on the electoral registrars of the State. What members opposite really said was that the officials were not carrying out their duties, and the police were not doing their work. If that was their attitude, he would not be surprised if they would never win again, because he was satisfied that the people had seen through their tactics.

Mr. VOWLES: He considered that the debate had gone to show the desirability of unanimity between State and Federal rolls. On the score of economy they should really have one roll, but, if they were going to continue to have double rolls, then one should be a check on the other. When the Elections Act became law there was a principle embodied in it, namely, compulsory voting, which appeared at present to be a dead letter. So keen were the Government of the day on compulsion, that a regulation was framed making it encumbent upon the returning officer, within seven days after the election, to send out a circular to every person whose name appeared on the roll and who did not vote, requesting them to give a valid excuse for not voting. If a person did not wish to vote for conscientious or other reasons he did not see why that person should be compelled to vote; but, if there was any virtue at all in compulsory voting, it was that if any person in receipt of such a circular did not answer it, then they should be perfectly satisfied that that person did not exist, and it would be a valid reason for deleting his name from the roll. He certainly considered that the rolls should be clarified. He would ask the Minister was it a fact that returning officers were given instructions not to send out circulars to those persons whose name appeared on the roll but who did not vote. The following was an extract from a letter which appeared in a Brisbane paper—he thought it was the "Courier"—immediately after the elections:—

> "Now, it will be interesting to note that the returning officers have received instructions not to post (which should be done seven days after the poll closed) a copy of Form 17, as directed in section 63 of the Act, to those persons who failed to vote, the said form demanding from the elector a valid, sufficient, and truthful reason why he failed to vote."

The letter was signed by "Geo. W. Morris," whom he thought was the chairman of the Merthyr Branch of the National Democratic Council. That was a direct statement which apparently had not been denied. The Government were very quick to rush into the breach when there was anything that suited them in the newspapers, and give a denial, but the above articles had appeared immediately after the elections when everybody was keen upon the matter, and apparently it had not been denied. It was a direct charge that the electoral registrar had been dominated by some person—presumably the Minister—who had arrogated to himself a power superior to the wish of Parliament, and told his officers not to carry out the instructions agreed to by the House. He would ask the Minister was that correct, and would like him to reply later on. As far as the election in his district was concerned, he had the greatest confidence in the staff who ran it, and also in the returning officer. But mistakes would happen, and he would like to know who was responsible for the mistakes to which he was about to refer. At Baking Board, a place beyond Chinchilla, the presiding officer there was a notorious partisan in politics; he was in the pay of his (Mr. Vowles's) opponent; he went to a meeting and created disorder there; yet he was allowed to occupy the position of presiding officer. He had written in reference to that matter to the electoral registrar. At an adjoining place—he thought it was Speculation—the returning officer there was another political partisan. He was president of the Workers' Political Organisation, and actually had the effrontery to refuse an elector a vote, although his name was on the roll, because the elector in question had been committed for assault or some other offence, and his reading of the law was that for that reason he was not entitled to the franchise. Was it reasonable to appoint a man of such mentality, who thought because he was returning officer he had the power to deprive a man of the franchise. That matter had been reported to the electoral registrar, with a request for a reply. The reply was that the matter had been referred to the Department of Justice, and, needless to say, he had heard nothing further.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The reason you had no reply is that we were not satisfied with the explanation, and have written for a further explanation. Our last request was to the police magistrate to interview the parties concerned.

Mr. VOWLES: They did not want any interview; he had sent them down the original letter. That man had an action at law against the returning officer for refusing him the biggest privilege any man could have—namely, the right to exercise the franchise; and, if the department did not treat him properly, or deal with the returning officer, that man was only waiting to have his remedy. As soon as the department had finished with the matter, if he (Mr. Vowles) was not satisfied, he would ventilate the matter in another way.

The PREMIER: You will do him a real disservice if you advise him that way.

Mr. VOWLES: They would see when the time came. He trusted that there would be no cause for action, that justice would be done, and the returning officer reprimanded. He would admit that it was difficult to get a man not tainted with some politics for the position of returning officer, but they should keep as far away as possible from the chief actors, and not have men notorious for their politics as presiding officers. They should not have men who were not regarded as fair in their politics in positions where they could do an injustice to an innocent elector.

Mr. TAYLOR thought members of the Opposition had reasonable grounds to complain of the conduct of the Attorney-General in sending out the circular which he sent out prior to the elections, to members sitting on the Government side, marked "confidential," giving the names of presiding officers and asking for suggestions with regard to the appointment of poll clerks. Surely the Minister could not uphold conduct such at that.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: I did not get any such letter.

Mr. TAYLOR: It rested with the Minister to deny whether that circular was sent out under his signature or not. It was sent round to Labour members asking them to name presiding officers and poll clerks.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Will the hon. gentleman say that any request he made as to polling-booths or anything else was refused?

Mr. TAYLOR: He made no request. But to send out such circulars was not the way to get a clean election, because, naturally, if he received a circular asking him to name the presiding officer or poll clerks, he most certainly would send in the names of his own supporters, and the same thing would apply to members of the Government.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: No member was asked to do that.

Mr. TAYLOR: If a circular such as that was sent out to members, who were they likely to nominate to the positions? As far as he was concerned, he had nothing to complain of in the way the election at Windsor was carried out. He was prepared to leave the matter of any election he was interested in in the hands of the school teachers there—and several of them were not supporters of his—because he believed that no better body of men would be found in the whole of the electorate to carry out an election on fair and square principles. But to ask politicians to name presiding officers and poll clerks was nothing short of a scandal, and whatever had caused the Minister to send out such a circular as that he did not know.

Mr. STOPFORD: Your Government gave it out to the magistrates to purge the rolls as much as possible of Labour supporters.

Mr. TAYLOR: The party bias and leaning of the Minister was amply demonstrated by the fact that the circulars were not sent out except to supporters of his own party. That was an action which they could not condemn too much, if they wanted to have elections carried out on fair and square lines. He would refer to another matter which was not carried out, but which should be carried out if they wanted to have clean rolls—that was the intimation to those persons who did not record their votes of the fact that they had not done so, and asking them to give their reasons. If no satisfactory explanation was given, the sooner they amended the Act and wiped those names off the roll the better.

The PREMIER: We would be bound to disfranchise people that way.

Mr. TAYLOR: He would disfranchise them if they could not show a satisfactory reason why they had not recorded their votes. He thought that the more the administration of the Elections Act was left in the hands of the electoral officers, and the less the department was interfered with by Ministers, the cleaner would be the rolls and the purer the voting. The circular sent out by the Minister amounted to a scandal, and it should not have been sent out. Something had been said with regard to spoon-feeding the electors, and that was what they were doing at the present time. They sent the policemen round to put people on the roll, but a policeman should not put anyone on the roll, unless it was a sick or invalid person. All men and women who had a right to vote were entitled to see that their names were put on the roll themselves, and it should not be the duty of the policeman to do it. It was that practice which was killing their electoral system, and causing a lot of talk about stuffing the rolls. He believed that the officers of the Electoral Department carried out their duties honestly and fairly. It would be quite easy for any individual to make a false declaration and get on the roll, but he did not think that a great many people did so. The trouble was that, when men or women got on the roll, they could live outside the electorate in another metropolitan electorate, for one or two, or nearly three years, and when an election came round could have their names either retained on the roll on which they appeared or have them recorded on the roll for the electorate in which they were living. He did not think that was a fair thing, and the Act should be amended in the direction of providing that a voter should be informed that, after he left a district, it was compulsory to enrol in the electorate in which he was living, after he had resided there for one or two months. To allow persons' names to remain on the rolls, as had been the practice in the past, was not a proper thing. He had only one instance to cite with regard to a person being on two rolls. He was informed about the time of the last election that one person was on the roll for Windsor and also for Maree. He went to the Electoral Office and made inquiries, and when they turned up the person's name they found that the statement was correct. The officer said, "Yes, it is certainly on two rolls, and we will have to make inquiries." They made inquiries, and

later on advised him that the name was on both rolls. Evidently, the person had made a false declaration on a previous occasion. The trouble was the name had been on the roll for Windsor, but had been marked off as being unable to be located for two previous years by the police officer; yet the name had been allowed to remain there, and had been also placed on the Maree roll. He was asked what he wished to have done, and he suggested that the name be placed on the Maree roll in connection with which the person had made the last application, and he believed that was done.

COMMITTEE INTERRUPTED.

CHILLAGOE AND ETHERIDGE RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor conveying the Royal assent to this Bill.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY RESUMED.

Mr. TAYLOR (continuing): With regard to what had been called partisan appointments of presiding officers and poll clerks, they knew that a man must have political leanings one way or the other. He thought that the officials of any organisation—National, Labour, or union—should not receive those political appointments. As far as possible the appointments of the officers should be left in the hands of the school teacher who might be the returning officer of a particular district. The only instruction which should be issued to him was that, as far as possible, officials of organisations should not be appointed to the positions. There would then be no ground of complaint. But if men like the one mentioned by the leader of the Opposition were to be appointed to these positions, it would give room for talk and for people to say that there was favouritism on one side or the other, and they should eliminate that from their elections.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He had no fault whatever to find with the returning officer in the Drayton electorate. The position was that no returning officer was appointed until a very short time before the election. The previous returning officer should have resigned. The department knew that he had removed from the district, so that he had no right to hold the position, and the Government should have appointed another returning officer weeks before it was done. In an electorate like Drayton it was difficult for a new returning officer to get things in order. It was a marvel that the man who was appointed had had a lot of experience in the Pittsworth electorate. He was simply appointed to the Drayton electorate as returning officer without having any information placed before him.

The TREASURER: He did his work very well.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did his work well, and the department had made a good appointment. He was a man who kept very quiet, and he (Mr. Bebbington) did not know what his politics were. He was a very good servant of the State as a school teacher, and a very good citizen. Where presiding officers took an active part in politics, they should not be appointed. If the matter were left in the hands of the returning officers, as a rule they would not appoint any extremist.

[3.30 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: You want to exclude the most intelligent men.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That was a matter of opinion. He knew if anyone on their side took any part in politics, efforts were very soon made to exclude them as presiding officers. He knew of a complaint having been made that, because a man asked a question at a political meeting, in the next day or two a Labour organiser had written a letter to the returning officer asking to have that particular person excluded.

Mr. PETERSON (*Normanby*): They had heard a good deal about the partiality of returning officers at election times. He did not see why all the fault should be put upon members on that side for having appointed so-called "partisans." He did not know that they could produce such an animal as a non-partisan. He did not believe they could, either in politics or in anything else. A great deal of umbrage had been taken with regard to a certain circular that had been sent out. Some country members were absolutely in the hands of the squatters, because the squatters were the presiding officers for all the outback places. Unfortunately, candidates on both sides were not in a position to send scrutineers out those vast distances. Were he to send out scrutineers to all the centres in the group divisions, it would cost a little over £500. It would not be worth it. The result was that the candidate to whom the squatter was opposed was absolutely at his mercy. He could not say whether he was fair or unfair; he was not going to impute any motives, other than to say that, though that system might be a cheap way of conducting an election, it was very unfair to the candidate who was opposed to the squatter. It seemed a remarkable thing that, when one made a suggestion to the department, they put the Crown law officer up against him and said it was not possible to alter the system. It was possible, without any trouble. What should be done in cases like that was that the candidates should be informed by the returning officer that on a certain date he would open the ballot-boxes to the satisfaction of both candidates, that he would seal them and send them away to the presiding officers; that, instead of sending the key with it, he would keep the key and the candidates would take the responsibility as to whether that ballot had been conducted properly. Under the present conditions a member might be running a tight race. They sent about forty or fifty boxes to the squatters, who had the keys. He had the boxes three or four days. Then they wondered how some of them "slipped" in the ballot. (Laughter.) If the Crown Law Office could not get over a little thing like that, it was time somebody else was put in charge. The same thing should apply where there might be partisanship as far as that side was concerned. He did not want to make flesh of one and fish of another. He was quite in accord with the view that the conduct of their elections should be above suspicion; there should be no room for reproach. He hoped, as far as the scattered country districts were concerned, some consideration would be given to the candidates.

He had not found the rolls so overloaded as hon. members had stated they were. He was in favour of a full roll rather than a short roll, as was the case years ago. The fault was not so much that the rolls were inflated. The individual elector was to blame inasmuch as, in changing his place of residence, he failed to state in the transfer form the place from which he came. That was why, in many cases, their names were left on the roll of the district they had left. A slight anomaly was very easy to get over; a small amendment of the Act, or a regulation, would overcome it. He challenged hon. members on both sides to give any direct evidence of a wholesale system of impersonation. It was an insult to the electors that those charges should be made. Just after the election they were made, and it was up to the gentlemen who made them to prove their accuracy. There was a case in his electorate at the last election in which it seemed there were two persons who were impersonating. When careful inquiry was made it was shown that in the Walterhall district there were two Walter Furnisses voted. Furniss was an uncommon name. It happened that at that time one Walter Furniss was away at the front and voted there. Another Walter Furniss voted in the electorate. There was only one "Walter Furniss" on the roll, and each man thought he was the one. Yet it appeared in the Press that there was a huge system of impersonation. He did not think that there was. He admitted that the rolls were inflated, and that on his roll there were names which should not have been there. But that was not the fault of the Government, in trying to get on the roll as many people as possible.

He would like to put in a plea for some of the returning officers. He had the record number of polling-booths in Queensland—a little over 100. It was absolutely unfair that returning officers, particularly men of the capability and standing of Mr. Patterson, should be called upon to do that work at the ridiculously low sum that was offered at the present time. If they expected to have elections carried out properly and carefully, they should be able to pay those men at least a living wage for the time engaged. If he were paid the ordinary public service rate for the work, the returning officer would be drawing about three times the amount at present granted to him. Imagine his returning officer being compelled to erase over 800 names from 104 rolls—rule out each name and initial it—and then be expected to carry out his other electoral duties! He did not think it was fair. It was all right for a city man, who might have only a dozen rolls to attend to. Although these were times when they should practise economy, in view of the strenuous nature of the work country returning officers—like country members—should receive a little extra consideration.

Mr. WARREN: He had absolutely no complaint to make in regard to the presiding officers, as all the officials connected with the Murrumba electorate had worked most honourably, but there were some things in connection with the election which were an absolute scandal. There were absolutely criminal practices adopted during that election, and it was up to the Department of Justice to make inquiries into those Acts. He did not know whether it was a criminal act or not, but he did know that the Nationalist candidate opposed to him gave free picture shows, free dances, and many other things. That was an absolute scandal in a free country. If those things were going to be allowed, they did not know where they would lead to. He did not mean to say that the Nationalist party agreed with those things, as no honest man could agree with them. The organisation called the National Political Council had adopted most disgusting practices, and it was time that this sort of thing was put a stop to. He had drawn the attention of the Department of Justice to those matters, and the reason why they had not been inquired into was because members of the Government lived in glass houses. For one thing, the Premier toured the State in an aeroplane at the expense of the State, which was an absolutely wrong thing to do. If the hon. gentleman had put his hands into the pocket of some individual and taken out money there would have been a certain amount of credit due to him, but he had put his hands into the pockets of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: You went around your electorate at the expense of the State, too. What is the good of your growling?

Mr. WARREN: Why did the hon. gentleman try to throw dust in the eyes of the people? Was it because he feared exposure? If it was good enough for him (Mr. Warren) to down Mr. Pritchard and the National Political Council, it was good enough for him to down the Government for what they had done. The Premier was just as guilty of stealing as the man who stole a bag from a woman at the racecourse the other week.

The HOME SECRETARY rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in saying that the Premier was as guilty of stealing as the person who stole a bag from a woman at the racecourse the other day?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member for Murrumba will recognise that he is not in order in making a statement which is offensive to another hon. member.

Mr. WARREN: He was very sorry if it was wrong to speak the truth.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw that statement.

Mr. WARREN: It was absolutely true and he could not withdraw it.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member ought to see that it devolves upon him to observe the decorum of the House and withdraw the statement he has made to which objection has been taken. I ask the hon. member to withdraw.

Mr. WARREN: What he said was that it was equal to what that individual had done——

The HOME SECRETARY: You said it was true.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member to withdraw the statement.

Mr. WARREN: It was true, and he would not withdraw.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the rules of the House, I must take further action if the hon. member refuses to withdraw. I should like the hon. member to reflect that the statement he has made is tantamount to a charge against a Minister, he

having said that some action that was not honourable was equal to the actions of the Minister. That being so, I urge the hon. member to withdraw before I am compelled to take further action.

Mr. WARREN: He was very sorry he could not withdraw, because he believed what he said to be absolutely correct.

The TREASURER: Don't be a big child! Withdraw!

Mr. WARREN: In deference to the Chairman's ruling he would withdraw.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. WARREN: The electoral business of the State wanted a lot of cleaning up, as things were not as they should be. It was not the fault of the officials, as they were absolutely honest. It did not matter whether they were Labour, Nationalist, or Tory—those men carried out their duties thoroughly and efficiently. There might have been a few instances where that was not done, but those cases were very few indeed. He had no desire to reflect on the police so far as electoral matters were concerned, but in some centres there were men whose names were not on the roll. As far as Murrumba was concerned, the police were withdrawn just when they were collecting the names, and it was impossible for them to take the part they should have taken so far as collecting names was concerned. A poor old man was lost in the district, and the police from all round the district were out looking for him at the time, so that, so far as Murrumba was concerned, there was a sufficient excuse for the withdrawal of the police, but in some cases there was no excuse at all. In one little place the people knew that within a mile or half a mile there were seven people who ought to be on the roll. The onus of proving that a man voted more than once should be on the Government, who must know of such cases, and whose duty it should be to punish them.

The TREASURER: Your side admit that there was little or no double voting.

Mr. WARREN: He honestly confessed there was not so much as had been said. In Murrumba only twenty out of 10,060 were supposed to have voted twice, and he supposed that if those cases were analysed it would be found that a great number of them did not vote more than once. Still, if only two voted twice they should be brought up to the scratch and made to pay. He commended to the Minister the necessity of bringing a better state of affairs than existed now, because there was any amount of room for improvement.

Mr. WEIR: It was interesting to contrast the experience of members now in opposition with the experience of the Labour party when in opposition in previous days, in view of the remarks of the hon. member for Burrum and others, particularly the hon. member for Merthyr, criticising the Government for corruption in regard to enrolment. He had sufficient confidence in the hon. member for Merthyr in respect to law—although he had not much confidence in him as a politician—to believe that if there were any case against the Government he would be able to test it. In "Votes and Proceedings" for 1912 a gentleman named Peter "Balderdash" Macgregor took a very prominent part in an Election Tribunal case, and put up a very fine case, not for the Nationalists, but for Labour against the Nationalists. He was suggesting that the hon. member was the same Peter "Balderdash" Macgregor; but the responsibility of Labour in those days was the responsibility of the Opposition to-day. If Burrum and Merthyr had the same corruption that they had in Maryborough, it was their duty to probe it to the bottom, as Maryborough did. The machinery was the same; and if they had the backbone of their convictions, what was wrong with fighting it out?

Mr. BRAND: We won't lose our money.

Mr. WEIR: He had sufficient confidence in the Colonial Sugar Refining Company and others to know that they would put up plenty of money if they thought they had a good case, but they knew they had not. In those days they had to chase the temporarily created member, Mr. E. B. C. Corser, now in the Federal Parliament, into a hollow log down on the South Coast of New South Wales to deliver the requisite document to make him contest another election. If they, a little handful of Labour people in Maryborough, could do that, how much better could their present opponents do it? The hon. member for Windsor, he thought, was decent enough to say that he did not think the officers were corrupt themselves.

Mr. BRAND: None of us here blames the officers.

Mr. WEIR: In 1912 they cleaned Maryborough of a certain class of creature, and if he could be discovered anywhere else now it was up to Labour to clean him out there, too. He made no excuse for cleaning out corruption in politics. They wanted the people assured that the rolls were reasonably clean, and they could do that by using the machinery they had. Everybody knew that things then were not as they ought to be, but he had lived to see the day when the returning officer in Maryborough had—as was done at last election—sent along a document saying, "I find no trace of any cases of illegal voting," although there were 5,500 names on the roll. That was something he was proud of—something that was due to Labour's efforts to clean Maryborough. The trouble was that when one cleaned the place one did not kill the microbe, but transferred it to other districts, and he found some of the microbes running affairs over in Maree, with the same rotten corruption. They hunted Mr. J. E. Müller—with two little dots over the "u"—out of Maryborough, but they found him now starring in the "Daily Mail" with such matter as the hon. member for Bremer read out, but which fizzled out to nothing. He did not believe any candidate, defeated or successful—and he had seen a good many from time to time—ever openly associated himself with a man who stooped to that sort of thing, and the sooner they got wise to their agents and realised that they carried some of the responsibility of their agents, the sooner would they get clean elections. He just wanted to read what Mr. Lennon, one of the assessors, said regarding the Elections Tribunal to which he had referred, to show that there was some suggestion that everything was not quite right—

> "Personally, I regret that the election has proved a failure owing to the fault of the machinery of Government in their returning officers and presiding officers, who have shown very great incompetence. I think it is a great pity that the Government should not step in and pay the whole of the costs."

And the gentleman who showed incompetence was a gentleman named Linedale, then police magistrate at Maryborough, and it went further than incompetence. Men in that position could not be excused for showing "greater incompetence." It was a deeply-laid scheme to keep Labour out of politics in Maryborough; but as soon as they cleaned out Maryborough they wound up with a stronghold that would not be lost to Labour for many years to come. Now it was the individuals employed by the party opposite who were responsible; but they dare not risk their case as they did in Maryborough, because they knew their reputation was not clean so far as politics was concerned.

Mr. KERR: He wanted to go into the figures regarding what they knew as "stuffed rolls": the interpretation of "stuffed" being that there was a greater number of names on the rolls than there were persons [4 p.m.] in the electorate. Owing to the rush election, they were not able to cleanse the rolls, and for that reason the Government were in power to-day. Had the rolls been cleansed prior to the election, and the supplementary roll been published at the right time, instead of seven or fourteen days before the election—not giving anyone a chance of looking round—the Government would not have been in power to-day. The number on the rolls of the sixteen metropolitan seats was 141,558. Of those, 55,773 voted for the Nationalist candidates, and 50,139 for the Labour candidates, giving the Nationalists a majority of 5,600 odd. The number of those who were enrolled, but did not vote, was 35,646. The Labour majority in Brisbane was 333, and the number who did not vote in the electorate was 2,002. In Maree, the Labour majority was 215, and the number who did not vote was 1,638. In Ithaca, the Labour majority was 229, and the number who did not vote was 2,202. On those figures, if the 35,646 who did not vote had voted, as they were required to do by the Elections Act, those three seats would have been won by the Nationalists, and to-day the party now sitting in opposition would have been on the Government benches. (Government laughter.) It would have taken one person in each electorate all his time to put on the rolls the number who should have been there. Personally, he attended to quite a lot. He again emphasised the fact that the supplementary rolls had been rushed out from seven to fourteen days before the election. It was time people were forced to vote. There was no doubt that of the 35,646 persons who did not vote in the metropolitan area, at least 25,000 would have voted for the Nationalist candidates if they had been compelled to go to the poll. The Labour party saw to it that their supporters went to the poll, but the same tender care was not taken by the Nationalist party. He trusted that no time would be lost in cleansing the rolls; and, seeing that the Federal Government were taking a census of the Commonwealth in April next, the time was opportune for cleansing the rolls. He would also like to see a unification of the State and Federal Electoral Registration Departments, with a view to saving expense, and to ensure that the rolls should be the same.

At five minutes past 4 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. member for Enoggera had given an illustration of the rottenness of the present political system and the present Elections Act. Hon. members opposite called themselves democrats; yet they held office against the wishes of a majority of 20,000 electors. No stronger condemnation could be uttered of the Elections Act and the way in which the Act was administered. Dealing with the residence qualification, the Act, which had been passed by the present Government, provided that before a person could be enrolled he must have resided in the electorate for one month; but that provision was a dead letter. During the recent contest they had instances of men drifting into an electorate one day and getting on to the roll the next. Either that was right or it was wrong.

Mr. PEASE: It is absolutely wrong.

Mr. SWAYNE: Then, why did the Government not amend the Act? If it was wrong that an elector should be required to reside one month in the electorate before he could get on the roll, that provision should be altered. But, so long as that was the law, it should be carried out. What had happened at the last elections only bore out what he had often said—that so long as one supported the Labour party he could do as he liked with impunity. They knew of cases where men had broken into stores and stolen firearms, and had been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, and had been released after three months.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in referring to that matter on this vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: He simply referred to the matter to show that, so long as a man supported the party opposite, he could break the law with impunity.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with electoral matters.

Mr. SWAYNE: The same principle prevailed in connection with their electoral system. If the Government thought that an elector voted for their side, the law did not hold. They all knew that the late elections were held during the busy season in the sugar districts, and that was, doubtless, one reason why the elections were hurried on. So far as he was concerned, he was not complaining from a personal point of view, because he got nearly twice the majority that he had at the previous election; but the law should be administered so long as it was not amended. As showing how useless the provision was in respect to the one month qualification, he took a list of some names to the police. They were uncommon names, and were the names of men who had arrived by boat on the Sunday and were put on the roll on the Monday. The police looked up the steamship passenger list, and found that the men had arrived the day before they were enrolled, yet they said they were powerless to prosecute. If that was so, what was the use of the Act? If the Government did the honest thing, they would either alter the law or see that it was carried out; but at present it was allowed to remain a dead letter. No doubt the impression of the Government was that it operated in their favour. One hon. member spoke about the character of the presiding officers, and he thought that one member on the other side said the control in that matter was in the hands of the squatters. He did not think that any worse episode in that connection could be found than what took place at the Herbert by-election in April last. What happened

there was that a gentleman who had had the control of elections at Ingham for a number of years was suddenly deprived of his office on the very eve of that election, and a noted partisan of the present Government was put in his place. When polling day came that person was unable to open the poll, and during the rest of the day his state was such that it caused disgust among the officials who had to do duty with him. With regard to polling-places in his electorate, he would point out that the election was held during a very busy time—when farmers were coping with the difficulty of getting off their crops, and every hour counted with them. Seeing that voting was compulsory, he thought it would have been only a fair thing to have granted those men reasonable facilities for recording their votes; but it was found that in two large centres where applications were made for the appointment of polling-booths it was refused, and no provision was made for the electors to record their votes. But where men were employed in railway construction a polling-booth was provided at every centre where a few men were employed. Why were farmers denied polling-booths when the men engaged in railway construction were granted polling facilities?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Was there any polling-booth that was not required?

Mr. SWAYNE: There was a very large number of farmers at the places he referred to, and it would have been a great advantage to them to have had a polling-booth appointed in those places. What he particularly rose for was to emphasise the remarks of the hon. member who had just resumed his seat in regard to the rottenness of the system which allowed a party to govern Queensland when they were in a minority—taking the votes of the people as a whole. Nothing stronger could be quoted to show that the whole election system required reforming.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): He would read from page 428 of "Hansard" for the current session what the hon. member for Mirani said with regard to the Herbert election. The hon. member said—

> "During the recent by-election for the Herbert, despite all that has been said, there is no getting away from the fact that a large number of voters were brought in from an adjoining electorate and placed on the roll, and during the recent general election it was shown that the safeguard of a month's residence was a dead letter, as voters came into an electorate and got on the roll in a few hours, and I have no doubt that the same thing occurred in connection with the by-election for the Herbert."

That was a definite charge made by the hon. member for Mirani, and it was really an attack on the officials. But everybody knew that an electoral official would not put on the electoral roll the names of persons unless they were qualified. The hon. member's statement was something like that made by the leader of the Opposition when he said the other evening that public servants were spies.

Mr. VOWLES rose to a point of order. The hon. member said that he stated that all public servants were spies. That was not true, and he asked that the hon. member be called upon to withdraw the statement.

The CHAIRMAN: The leader of the Opposition having denied that he said that all public servants were spies, the hon. member for Herbert must withdraw that statement.

Mr. PEASE: He would withdraw his remark, but he would say that the statement appeared in "Hansard," and he would look it up later on. With regard to the charge of the hon. member for Mirani, he had sent a copy of what the hon. member said to the Minister, and the Minister had called upon the Electoral Registrar for a report on the subject. Mr. Cole sent the following telegram to all the electoral registrars in the Herbert electorate—

> "Re enrolment your division Herbert electorate prior to election. Statement made that electors probably came into electorate and got on roll in a few hours. Advise me urgently whether you have any information of such action having occurred your division; also inquire from police.
>
> "COLE,
>
> "Principal Electoral Officer."

The replies received to that telegram were as follows:—

"Ingham.

"Yours sixth; have no information any instance enrolment prior election on less month's residence.

"WILSON,

"Acting Registrar, and Police Magistrate."

"Innisfail.

"Your wire yesterday: know of no such thing as mentioned therein. Great care was exercised by police and this office in connection with enrolments."

That was signed by the State electoral registrar and police magistrate.

"Herberton.

"Yours yesterday re enrolment this division Herbert electorate. No information action under reference. No foundation statements regarding this division, as no enrolments after 3rd August last.

"BYRNE."

"Cardwell.

"Yours to-day; only one enrolment during August. No foundation as far as this division concerned.

"A. CUMMINS, Constable."

Then, on the 8th of the present month, Mr. Cole sent the following wire to the electoral registrars at Cardwell, Herberton, Ingham, and Innisfail:—

"My wire 6th. Wire me report same subject in regard to claims received prior Herbert by-election this year.

"COLE."

To that telegram he received the following replies:—

"Cardwell.

"Yours 8th. According to records, 30th January date last name enrolled previous to by-election in April.

"A. CUMMINS."

"Ingham.

"Your wire 8th. Have no information any instance enrolment prior by-election this year less than month's residence. Police report special care exercised by them.

"Electoral Registrar."

"Innisfail.

"Your wire yesterday regarding claims received. Prior by-election this year greatest care was exercised by this office.

"State Electoral Registrar."

No reply was received from Herberton, but there were no registrations for that division prior to the by-election. He held in his hand the supplementary rolls for the Herbert electorate for the last general election, which were dated the 10th August and 13th September. The hon. member for Enoggera stated that supplementary rolls were issued a few days prior to the election, but he could inform the hon. member that, as far as his electorate was concerned, the latest date for a supplementary electoral roll was the 13th September. This was what happened: The Opposition had been trying to belittle the officers in the Herbert electorate. A supplementary roll was issued on the 10th August, and 477 names were erased. A supplementary roll was issued on the 13th September, and 439 names were erased. Nearly 1,000 names were taken off those two rolls, showing conclusively that the statement of the hon. member for Mirani was wrong. The hon. member for Mirani got up and made charges, and when pulled up, he turned a deaf ear to what was said. There was another matter that might be cleared up. The North Queensland Country party had an officer who was very efficient. He lived in Townsville, but travelled from Mackay to the Gulf, and his duty was to see that names were taken off the roll that had no right to be there. To show the intimidation practised by the Northern Country party, a woman who shifted from Mourilyan to Innisfail received a circular from the Northern Country party telling her that if she did not get her name enrolled she was liable to a fine. The woman came to him (Mr. Pease), as she was afraid they were going to send her to gaol.

Mr. FRY: Have you got one of those circulars?

Mr. PEASE: Yes, he had several of them.

Mr. FRY: Produce one.

Mr. PEASE: He would produce one later on. (Opposition laughter.) He would read what Mr. McMahon, the Nationalist organiser in the North, said about the Herbert election. Members opposite had a lot to say about the returning officer at Ingham, and the hon. member for Mirani said that the poll was not opened at the correct time. He (Mr. Pease) was there, and he knew that the poll was opened at the correct time.

Mr. VOWLES: You were not there. You came away in the train with me.

Mr. PEASE: He got information from the sergeant of police that the poll was opened at the correct time.

Mr. VOWLES: He was drunk all the time I was there. He wanted to fight everybody.

Mr. PEASE: That was not true. The returning officer did not want to fight anybody. Opposition members were defaming a man who was a jolly sight better than a lot of members on their own side. The man held a record as a second class teacher in Queensland. He was assistant returning officer when the by-election took place, but he would not act at the general election, because he held a position on the W.P.O., and he was too honourable to take up the position of returning officer. As a matter of fact, he was appointed for that position without his sanction.

Mr. VOWLES: I was up there, and I saw him.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member was there only a few hours. He could tell them that the man they were referring to refused to accept the appointment at the general election. For the benefit of hon. members opposite he would read them what was said by Mr. McMahon, the Nationalist organiser, in a letter to the editor of the Cairns "Daily Times," which was published on 23rd September, 1920—

"Sir,—After the last Herbert by-election when Mr. P. Pease won that seat on the unlucky (for the Tories) 13th of a certain month, a gross misstatement appeared in their mouthpiece, the 'Post,' emanating from the organising secretary of the N.P.U. This gentleman stated that hundreds of navvies had been brought from Millaa Millaa to the Herbert electorate, at the instigation of the Labour Government, with the object of helping the Labour vote. Perhaps Mr. Bradley had to find some excuse for his signal failure, and also to vent his spleen for his pecuniary loss, but, however that may be, the fact remains that this statement was grossly unfair and absolutely untrue.

"I arrived at Innisfail on Monday, 12th January, and the first thing I did was to instruct a friend who was in a position to obtain evidence to ascertain if there was any undue or unusual migration of workers from another electorate to the Herbert. He was continuously in with me up to the date of the closing of the rolls, and we found that only four men from Millaa Millaa came to the Herbert who had their names added to the rolls.

"Now, as to the 731 names added to the roll during the course of the contest, it may be very interesting information to Mr. Bradley to know that during my stay in the Herbert from 12th January to the closing of the rolls, I enrolled 113 electors myself. As there were three National organisers at work, it may be easily presumed that they did as much, which would account for more than half of the 731 names about which Mr. Bradley wails so loudly. But the loss of that £100 in the event of a win must have stung, and most all curs whine when they get stung.—Yours, etc.,

"M. MCMAHON,

"Late organiser, N.N.P.U."

So far as the officials were concerned, they were practically appointed by the party opposite. Most of the election officials at Ingham were men actively engaged by the party opposite. When the names were referred to him he took no steps at all to remove anybody, and he was quite prepared to go to the poll, leaving the officials as they were. He was quite satisfied to appoint a scrutineer to watch the presiding officer. They had not enough money to appoint scrutineers everywhere, so they accepted the word of every presiding officer. It did not matter to him whether the presiding officer were Labour or Liberal; he was satisfied they were not all rogues. They did their duty, so far as the Herbert electorate was concerned. The hon. member for Merthyr

and the hon. member for Burrum spoke about circulars being sent out to members on the Government side appointing returning officers. So far as Ingham was concerned there was not one appointment made under his (Mr. Pease's) supervision or advice. Every presiding officer at the last election was appointed by the returning officer without consulting him at all, and he could say that the majority of those appointed were actively employed in working for members belonging to the party opposite. The leader of the Opposition tried to cast aspersions on the returning officer. As a matter of fact the man was ill.

Mr. VOWLES: He was not ill when I saw him.

Mr. PEASE: He told the whip of the Nationalist party (Mr. Fry) that he had copies of circulars sent out by the Northern Country party; he now handed one to the hon. member for Kurilpa to peruse himself, and he had twenty more in his bag if the hon. member wanted to see them. He did not know if hon. members knew about the California Creek incident which took place under a Liberal Government. About fifteen or twenty people resided at California Creek, but when the election took place it was found that about 500 votes were recorded there. The hon. member for Mirani seemed to be interested in the Herbert electorate and went up there to help the Northern Country party candidate. In spite of that, he (Mr. Pease) got a majority ten times larger than the one he received at the by-election some months earlier. The hon. member for Mirani tried to belittle his own party. He said that the candidate for the Herbert was as good as a Labour man.

INTERRUPTION OF BUSINESS.

At thirty minutes after 4 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the provision of Standing Order No. 306 and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on the 16th instant, I will 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 at a later hour of the day.

QUESTIONS.

ORGANISER—STATE LOAN.

Mr. FRY, in the absence of Mr. T. R. Roberts, asked the Treasurer—

"1. Upon what terms and conditions as to—(*a*) salary; (*b*) term of appointment; (*c*) bonuses; (*d*) other matters, has Mr. G. M. Dash been appointed organiser of the State loan, of which the prospectus has just been issued?

"2. What amount does the Treasurer propose to spend in connection with the loan publicity campaign?"

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

"1. This information will be made available when the account sales of the loan are published.

"2. Such amount as may be necessary to give full publicity to the loan."

STATE SCHOLARSHIP—SUGGESTED ALTERATION OF RULES.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*), in the absence of Mr. Forde, asked the Secretary for Public Instruction—

"As the basic wage in Queensland is higher than £156 per annum, and that whereas only children of parents whose gross income does not exceed £156 per annum, 'or £30 per member of family,' are entitled to an allowance if such children pass the examination for a State school scholarship, will he make the necessary recommendation to Cabinet to have the rules in connection with scholarship allowances altered so that children of parents whose gross income does not exceed £250 per annum, or £50 per member of family, will be entitled to an allowance if they pass the required State school scholarship examination?"

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

"Yes. As soon as the state of the public finances admits."

APPOINTMENT AND DISMISSAL OF PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY TO THE OPPOSITION.

Mr. VOWLES, in the absence of Mr. Corser, asked the Premier—

"1. Will he lay upon the table of the House the copies of the public service form filled in and of "Government Gazette" notices relative to the appointment and dismissal of Mr. Ellis from the position of Parliamentary Secretary to the Opposition, which he failed to include among the papers tabled on Thursday last?

"2. Upon what date was Mr. Ellis's dismissal approved by the Governor in Council, and when was the Order in Council giving it effect gazetted?"

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

"1 and 2. I think quite enough of the time of the House has been taken up by this matter. But for the action of the hon. member and his friends in making a partisan of an officer who, like every other public servant, should have been a neutral, Mr. Ellis might have remained indefinitely secretary not only to the present Opposition but to successive Opposition parties in this House."

REVENUE, EXPENDITURE, AND SALE OF DEBENTURES.

Mr. G. P. BARNES asked the Treasurer—

"1. What is the total expenditure by the State from 1st July, 1920, to 17th December, 1920—(*a*) on Loan Account; (*b*) on Trust Account?

"2. What was the total amount received during the same period into—(*a*) Loan Account; (*b*) Trust Account?

"3. What has been the total amount received by the Government through the sale of debentures from 1st July, 1920, to 17th December, 1920?

"4. What was the total amount received by the State for the period from sources other than the above?"

The TREASURER replied—

"1, 2, and 4. The position of the various funds is disclosed in the quarterly

returns published by the Treasury in the 'Government Gazette.' The return for the quarter ended 30th September was issued on the 16th November, and that for the quarter and half-year ending 31st instant will be available next month."

"3. £65,300."

IMPORTED JAM PULP USED AT STATE CANNERY.

Mr. G. P. BARNES asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. What quantity of jam pulp has been imported into Queensland by the State cannery during the months of October, November, and December to date, and what is the money value of the pulp?

"2. Is it a fact that this imported pulp is being canned by the State and sold as the product of the State cannery?

"3. Is he aware that large quantities of fruits grown in the State are available for canning purposes?"

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) replied—

"1. A small quantity of fruit pulp, sufficient to complete the cannery's assortment of jams, such pulp or fruit not being obtainable in Queensland at the time.

"2. This pulp is being dealt with in exactly the same way as in all other canneries in Australia.

"3. Yes and for the hon. member's information I might mention that the State cannery is prepared to purchase to its fullest capacity Queensland-grown fruits. They have already entered into an agreement with the Beerburrum growers to purchase 30,000 cases of pineapples at a good price, and are negotiating at the present time with fruitgrowers' associations for the purchase of a large additional quantity. They have also offered to take a very large proportion of the Stanthorpe fruit, and are out to assist the growers in every possible way. It is manifest that this question is not being asked in the interests of the growers, but apparently with a view of injuring the cannery business, which, in view of what that enterprise is doing, and is prepared to do, for the growers, can only be looked upon as a most unpatriotic action."

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Rule of Court, as of Friday, 10th December, 1920.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

(*Mr. Kirwan, Brisbane, in the chair.*)

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

Question again stated—That £32,965 be granted for "Electoral Registration."

Mr. PEASE (continuing): He wished to get a circular into "Hansard." It was headed "Northern National Political Union." He would like the Committee to take notice that all these things were in connection with the Federal roll. It showed that these people had some means of access to the Federal roll—

"Dear Sir or Madam,—I beg to advise you that whilst your name appears on the Federal roll as living at the present time at Almaden, the State electoral roll for Eacham still retains your name as being resident at Mareeba.

"This is obviously contradictory, and as you are now resident in the Herberton subdivision of the Chiliagoe electorate, it is necessary that you complete an application for enrolment for the electorate for which you are now resident. For this purpose I enclose you the necessary form filled in as far as possible, and ask that you will fill in answer to question No. 5, sign same, and have your signature witnessed by an elector. On completion please return to Post Office, Box 259, Townsville, when same will be immediately lodged on your behalf."

It was strange that that association was the Northern National Political Union, and that from Mackay to the Gulf the same circular had been issued, with instructions to be returned to this particular post box in Townsville. The forms were all duly filled in ready for transfer, and one could imagine that it would be a fairly big temptation if these matters were attended to as they asked. Some hundreds of forms were to be filled in and sent to care of some official of an organisation in Townsville which was not out to improve the Labour party. What would happen if the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union in Townsville asked for or sent circulars to all their members in the various districts from Mackay north, and asked them to send their transfers, not to the people who should attend to them, but to the head of the Australian Workers' Union in Townsville? What a howl there would be! But they did not howl at the instance he had given on the other side. Imagine a man or woman whose enrolment had to be attended to in Innisfail, Chillagoe, Normanton, or Thursday Island being asked by this organisation to send the necessary application to Townsville for attention! Why at Townsville, and why allow any official of a political organisation to have control? It would lead to very corrupt practices. The circular continued—

"Failing immediate attention to this matter, an objection to your name appearing on the Eacham roll will be lodged, and, in conclusion, I have to advise you that your neglect to attend to the matter leaves you liable to a penalty.

"Yours faithfully,

"H. G. BRADLEY,

"Organising Secretary."

If the Australian Workers Union had dared to send out such a circular as this, they would have been howled at from one end of Queensland to the other. In "Hansard," page 671, for this session, the leader of the Opposition said—

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He rose to a point of order. Was the hon. member in order in quoting from "Hansard" of this session?

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in quoting from "Hansard" of this session.

Mr. PEASE: The leader of the Opposition said that what this Government wanted was a spy in the camp of the Opposition, and that what he was offered was a secretary from the public service of the State. If that was not insinuating that the public servants would lend themselves to spying, he did not know what was.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): While on the matter of the Electoral Department, it might be as well to clear up in some small measure some of the misstatements which had been made regarding the number of persons who voted in a dual capacity at the recent elections. He supposed that he had one of the most inconvenient electorates in Queensland for keeping tally of all the voters. It was a tremendously large electorate—easily the largest in the State—and a large number of the men in it were nomadic workers—men who were natives of or had their homes in New South Wales, and came up to the Gregory electorate merely for the shearing season. There were other men who went into mining industries which were sometimes closed down, almost every year, and they shifted from the electorate and were heard of no more. There was the ordinary station hand or drover, who were very hard men to keep track of. These men worked on stations and then would go away, and it was very difficult for any electoral officer to say whether they had left the electorate, or were merely leaving the station on which they were working, so as to go to work in some other part of the same subdivision. Amongst such a large body of nomadic workers as this, there would be a considerable number of anomalies at election time. When one considered the enormous number of William Smiths and Joseph and James Browns and William Richardsons that were on the electoral roll for every district, and recognised the large number of men who could so easily vote in the name of another individual, believing that they were voting in their own name, it was no wonder that there was a considerable number of anomalies at election time. He really believed that very few men voted twice at elections purposely to record two votes, and that very often mistakes were made, not by the individual who was voting, but more often by presiding officers who were led into them by scrutineers. Of course, as he was reminded by an hon. member, there must always be a percentage. In an electorate such as his, they would naturally think there would be a larger percentage than in any other electorate, because of the large number of industries and the number of nomads. He had here a report signed by Mr. Johnstone Smith, the returning officer for Gregory, dated 15th November last, addressed to the Chief Electoral Office, in which it was stated—

> "I have the honour to inform you that I have examined the rolls which have been used and marked at the several polling-places within the electoral district of Gregory at the election held on the 9th day of October, 1920. I have ascertained whether any electors appear to have voted at more than one polling-place, and the following list shows the names and numbers of all electors who appear to have so voted at more than one polling-place."

Mr. Smith gave four men, numbers 55, 625, 5882, and 6150, and he wound up his report by saying—

> "I take the liberty of expressing my opinion with respect to the above voters. No. 55—I am of the opinion that the same person did not vote twice, but that the votes were registered by father and son of the same name, both believing that he was No. 55. No. 625—In my opinion votes were cast by two separate persons, each believing that he was No. 625."

In regard to the next number, 5,882, he said. "I am of the opinion that the error was made in marking the roll by the presiding officer at Springvale." The last number was 6,150, and he said about that, "I am of the opinion that two separate persons voted, each believing that he was No. 6,150." The name in that case was a very simple one—George Smith. Any George Smith would be likely to vote, particularly as was the case out there—when they were both shearers or both labourers. It was a very easy matter for one man to vote in the name of another, who would vote in that name at some other polling-booth. This effectively disproved the allegations which were made immediately after the elections, to the effect that a considerable number of "ghosts" voted. He could not conceive of any amendment of the Electoral Act which would make provision for all of those men on different stations to remain on the roll when they were in the one electorate, and give justice to everybody concerned. He could not conceive of any amendment which would make provision for a man who left the station and who did not leave the electorate, but was working somewhere around the place—a provision that would keep him on the roll until he had the opportunity of re-registering at the place he went to. One subdivision of his electorate—Boulia—comprised about 12,000 square miles. Many men who worked on a station would, after a time, leave it and go to adjoining places. The police might make a canvas every one or two years. It was impossible for those men to get to places where there were forms, without riding 50 or 100 miles. It was impossible to find any other method of registration because, usually, they were not in a position to take the trouble, and many of them were unable to read or write. The present system, which did not allow a man's name to be struck off the roll until he registered in some other electorate, was in his opinion the only sound one that could make provision for men who were situated as these men were.

Mr. COSTELLO: He is not struck off when he is placed on another roll; that is the trouble.

Mr. POLLOCK: There they came to the crux of the whole matter. He agreed that mistakes often would arise because of that. They very often found men who did not know one electorate from another. For instance, a man knew he was on the roll, say, in Winton. He would leave there and go, say, to Charters Towers; and after being there the requisite length of time he would ask some individual—perhaps a policeman—to put his name on the roll. Very often they would find the policeman did not understand for which electorate his name was on the roll previously. He would put this man's name on the roll at Charters Towers, and say he was not

previously on any roll in Queensland. If men who filled in claim forms made those mistakes, they could not blame the individual who did not understand the Electoral Act. Many hon. members probably would not understand it, either, were it not for the fact that it was portion of their duty to understand it. Many men in the bush did not know it was necessary, when they were being enrolled in the new place, to give the name of the subdivision and divisions in which they were before. Probably many of them did not know the names of the divisions. They certainly did not know the name of the electorate, and many of them did not even know the name of the subdivision. They might say they were on the roll—as often happened in his electorate—for a place like Urandangie. They did not know whether Urandangie was in the Boulia subdivision of the Gregory, or in the Duchess subdivision. Many of them did not know whether it was in the Flinders electorate or in the Gregory. The boundary lines in those parts were not so well know to bushmen as they might be. He was not going to say there was roll-stuffing, because of the carelessness or incapacity of people who sometimes filled in electoral claim forms. A good many of the mistakes arose from that cause. If any member could show a method by which justice could be done to the elector who was not always able to see that his own name was kept on the roll, and at the same time do justice to the State generally, that side of the House would have no objection to adopting it. He really believed the present electoral system was the best. Until something better was forthcoming he would not revert to the old system of wiping names off the roll as soon as a man happened to shift for a few days from his usual place of residence.

Mr. COSTELLO: If he shifts permanently, what about it?

Mr. POLLOCK: The Electoral Act compelled him to have his name placed on a new roll, or suffer a penalty. The same thing applied to the Commonwealth roll. If he went through his own roll he would find on it names of people who probably had shifted elsewhere. If those men had shifted elsewhere and had enrolled, they had not put on their electoral claim forms the fact that they were previously in the other electoral district.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: There should be a method of checking the rolls.

Mr. POLLOCK: If the Opposition could show them some method of checking the rolls properly and wiping off names that should not be on a roll because they were on some other roll, he thought that side of the House would welcome it. He, for one, would, because he realised that where there was voting on stations such as there was in his constituency, with very frequently only a Tory manager and a Tory bookkeeper, without any possibility of his getting a Labour scrutineer, swollen rolls were no good to him but were a positive menace.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: There were sixty New South Wales shearers whose names were on the roll and who voted.

Mr. POLLOCK: He did not know that there were. The Opposition had failed, so far, to bring any proof of that. He knew it was a hard task, but if there were any such proof, and it was not merely an ex-parte statement, he would like the Opposition to produce it. If it could be shown there were on the roll names that should not be there, he would like to see them wiped off. He had seventy or eighty polling-booths in his electorate. He was unable to provide scrutineers for, perhaps, thirty or forty of them at election time, because they were far removed from the railway line and it was very difficult to get to the places before election time. If he did not happen to know some man on the station, he had to go without a scrutineer. If there were twenty or thirty names on the roll for each of those stations which should not be there, hon. members would readily understand it was a bigger menace to him than, perhaps, not having there a few names that ought to be there. If anybody could show him how to purge the rolls and get a fair deal to those bushmen who ought to be on the roll, he would support them.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The fact that there were 65,000 more names on the State roll than on the Federal disclosed a state of affairs that called for careful scrutiny. Everyone must admit that something had to be done to remedy that situation. It did not reflect any credit on the officers of the department or on the Government which permitted that state of affairs to exist. He quite agreed that under the existing Electoral Act it was most difficult to purify matters to such an extent that they could eliminate that large number of excess names. There was one way out of the difficulty that had not been discussed at any great length, and that was by the combining of the State and Federal rolls. The hon. member for Enoggera briefly touched on the matter, and it really seemed to him to be a solution of the difficulty. South Australia had quite recently adopted the proposal, and

[5 p.m.] the Federal and State rolls were now one, and it was easy to conceive that if the two sets of officers set out with the object of purifying the rolls, they must arrive at some process of elimination which would make the rolls more or less accurate. The Treasurer, when introduring the Savings Bank Amalgamation Bill, stressed the argument of economy, and pointed out that it meant the elimination of one set of officers. That was a very useful argument to use when it suited his purpose; but it seemed to him to be quite beside the mark to argue that way unless the Government carried out in its entirety this amalgamation of interests in a direction where real economy and efficiency could be achieved. It was quite obvious that the amalgamation of the two rolls would not only lead to economy, but certainly to efficiency. What was more important still in this State was a redistribution of seats. They were not so concerned about the 65,000 excess names on the roll as they were about the redistribution of seats, because he did not believe any election was won or lost during the last election through impersonation or plural voting. There may have been occasional cases of plural voting, but not to such an extent as would affect the result. It was rather amusing to read the opinions of the Labour party in the different States on the question of a redistribution of seats. In Queensland, where it was an outstanding evil, members on the Government side were quite silent because it suited them. In Victoria, where there had been in existence a somewhat unequal distribution of seats, Mr. Prendergast, leader of the Labour Opposition, on 6th July moved

the adjournment of the House. So urgent a matter was it that the affairs of the State had to be held up while the matter was discussed. He moved the adjournment of the House because the Government did not possess the confidence of the House owing to its failure to introduce legislation for an equitable redistribution of seats. Mr. Ryan, the late Premier of Queensland, who was now in the Federal House, had something to say on the matter a few weeks ago. While Mr. Ryan was speaking, a Nationalist member interjected—

> "In spite of all the insults levelled at Nationalism, the country had sufficient confidence in it to return it to power."

Mr. Ryan replied—

> "It is here by reason of misrepresentation and an electoral law which was framed up to suit its purpose."

It was really humorous. Mr. Ryan, who was part and parcel of this misrepresentation a few months previously and who was part and parcel of the frame-up in Queensland which permitted the Labour party to return to power representing a minority of the people, when he changes his location, and goes down to the Federal arena where he was in opposition, altered his tune entirely, and the National party had been cooking the electoral law and following all sorts of evil practices, whereas he knew quite well that hon. members opposite were really occupying those benches because of the very complaints which Mr. Ryan was levelling against the Nationalists.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: You say it is not true.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yes. There was a difference of opinion. He had no objection to members opposite occupying the invidious position of controlling the affairs of Queensland when the people did not want them to do it, because they were quite sure that that kind of thing was going to bring about its own retribution.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Why not prove your statements?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That was really calling the pot black. The hon. gentleman made a string of assertions on Friday night which were a disgrace to him and his office, and he had not attempted to prove one of them yet. He wanted briefly to touch on some of the statements which the hon. member for Merthyr made regarding the 1,300 names which appeared on the Merthyr roll in excess of the adult population there. He happened to know that the Federal officers had been looking into the matter, and out of those 1,300 names, some 300 of them had all their correspondence and other things returned through the Dead Letter Office, and another 900 of them had changed their residences to other parts of the State. Any electoral law which would permit that sort of thing to exist was not satisfactory, and he was sufficiently broadminded to say that it could not be satisfactory to any member of the House, and he was hoping that the continual calling attention to the irregularities which existed in that regard would result in some process being adopted which would lead to a purification of the rolls. One system that he would advocate was an amalgamation of the Federal and State rolls.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): He would impress upon the Government the urgent need for a redistribution of seats. He heard an hon. member interject something about Victoria, and he admitted that there was a scandalous state of affairs in Victoria, but there it was somewhat different to what it was in Queensland. In Victoria the larger seats were represented by Government members, while in Queensland a majority of the thickly-populated constituencies were represented by members of the Opposition.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not accurate.

Mr. SIZER: Taking the electorates of Nundah, Toombul, Windsor, and Enoggera, the hon. members representing those electorates represented somewhere about 45,000 electors, while the leader of the Nationalist party represented about 13,000. He was sure the Home Secretary would not attempt to justify that position. If the Government allowed that position to continue and they remained in office on a minority vote, the time would come when they would be swept from office, and that section of the community that always stood for the Labour party because it was democratic would turn from them for ever. He realised that it might be very difficult to arrange a distribution of seats in Queensland and provide for only seventy-two members, especially as they must not allow the cities to dominate the situation. They must give adequate protection to the country by way of quota.

The HOME SECRETARY: We will give Brisbane the right to control its own affairs and form the rest of Queensland into another State.

Mr. SIZER: He would very much prefer to support a proposal for dividing the State than the Labour party's proposed programme of unification. He would like to hear it debated.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will not proceed to debate it on this question.

Mr. SIZER: He would not. He did not see how the difficulties were to be overcome if they stuck to the single-member electorates. He did not want to go back to the two-member electorate system. He wanted a system of proportional representation—the only fair system on which members should be elected to any Parliament. He was open to admit that the position in the Federal Senate was not satisfactory; but, although he was prepared to accept a system of preferential voting with a compulsory contingent vote, he did not do it because he liked it, but merely in preference to the present system. He could not see how the State was to be adequately represented and the interests of the sections in it safeguarded unless they had a system of proportional representation, and he strongly urged the Government to consider it with the Federal divisions as a basis of their redistribution, not necessarily following the boundaries exactly. Let each of the ten electorates return five members, or, if members opposite wanted seventy-two members, let each electorate return seven members, by which method they would have a House as nearly as possible a true replica of the votes outside. He knew there were difficulties—probably one of the greatest being the areas to be traversed—but it would be no harder for their seven State members than for the one Federal member. He knew there were members on the other side who agreed with him, and he would like to see the Government, at the earliest possible moment, collect information, if they needed information, or

—which he would sooner see—introduce a straightout measure of proportional representation on that basis.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): Some of the most extraordinary statements had been made by members in opposition, which, when they were put to the test, had been shown to be entirely unfounded. Time after time statements had been made about scandals and things which were a disgrace to the State being allowed and encouraged by the Government; but when it came to the point hon. members had to be frank and admit that there was nothing wrong so far as their elections were concerned. It seemed strange that statements should be made but proof should not be forthcoming in support of them. When statements were made from the Government side, there was immediately the cry: "Where is the proof?" and the proof had been furnished. If one thing more than another was a scandal, it was the issue of that circular from a Northern political office; nothing could have been more intimidating and scandalous. Scores of electors in the Charters Towers, Kennedy, and Queenton electorates had had to leave to earn a living elsewhere. So far as the Commonwealth electoral law was concerned, immediately they had been out of the electorate or the subdivision of an electorate for a month, they were under the obligation of having their names on the rolls altered accordingly under a penalty of £2. That was very unfair and inconvenient; his contention had always been that where the man habitually resided and where his family was he should have his vote. As a result of those circulars, quite a number of persons, particularly women, who thought they were transgressing the State electoral law and were liable to be punished, changed their names to another roll, although they were not under a legal obligation to do so, and did not wish to do so. The fact that the claims were returned to a private office where people could do as they pleased with them, was nothing less than a public scandal.

What the late Premier said in his speech, so far as the Federal elections were concerned, was not in reference to the electoral law so much as to the method of voting, and he did not know what an hon. member would call fair or just who said that the system at the last Federal election was fair or just. The hon. member for Oxley practically stood by that method, whereas the hon. member for Nundah said just the very opposite.

Mr. SIZER: So far as the Senate is concerned.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: It applied, perhaps, to the Senate much more forcibly, but it was not as equitable as the method that existed in Queensland at the present time.

Mr. SIZER: There is no difference between the system for the House of Representatives and our system, except that the contingent vote here is not compulsory. If you made it compulsory, the two systems would be on all-fours.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: The Senate election was the most important so far as Queensland was concerned, because the Senate was supposed to represent the State as a whole. The preferential system that was adopted in connection with the Senate election was one of the most scandalous things ever perpetrated by any Government. With reference to the redistribution of seats, the hon. member for Nundah admitted that there was a good deal to be said against it. There was no question that what the party opposite had in view was a system which would benefit the cities at the expense of the country. What hon. members opposite were anxious to do, as they had been anxious in connection with previous redistributions of seats, was to wipe out a few seats that were held by members on this side which the other side knew they would never be able to win. His contention always had been that the districts far removed from the capital should receive more consideration in the matter of representation than the metropolitan area. The hon. member for Nundah knew something of the Kennedy Federal electorate and of the difficulty in covering the ground in that electorate; but, if there were five or seven members for an electorate like that, the hon. member would not care to have to go round the whole district. It was all very well to apply the system the hon. member had suggested to the metropolitan area, where it would be an easy matter to get over the whole electorate, but it would be a very different matter to travel over the whole of the Federal districts of Kennedy or Herbert, or even of Capricornia. The principle of proportional representation was all right in theory. He did not know whether the hon. member had any experience of two members for the same electoral district. He (Mr. Winstanley) had, from personal observation, and he knew what happened under that system. But what had happened with two members would be nothing compared with what would happen if they had five or seven members representing the one electorate. In the case of double electorates, one member was always trying to score a point at the expense of his colleague, and the evil would be accentuated if they had five or seven members for an electorate. In spite of all that had been said with respect to the duplication of names on the roll—and no one denied that there was some duplication—not one scintilla of proof could be advanced in support of charges of personation or electoral abuses. In fact, the conduct of elections was to the credit of the Government rather than otherwise. He had heard a good many members say that what they wanted was a clean roll and a fair roll. His past experience of what hon. members opposite meant by a clean roll was a roll from which the name of every elector could be struck off immediately he left an electorate or changed his residence. Unless a man owned a house and was permanently domiciled in one place, he could not get a vote at all under the system favoured by the party opposite. The result was that thousands of men were unable to vote at elections. They might get their names on the roll; but, when election time came round, they found their names had been removed. What those hon. members meant by a clean roll was a roll from which large numbers of persons who supported the Labour party had been removed, because they were the people who moved about—the people whom hon. members opposite characterised as nomads, parasites, and loafers. The Government had succeeded in getting people's names on the roll, and it was far better for a man's name to be on two rolls than for it not to be on any roll at all. In spite of the charges that had been made, he believed that both the last election and the previous election were conducted as honestly

and straightforwardly as any previous election. After the last two elections they heard of several cases in which the party opposite asserted that they had good proof that there were several seats won by the Government to which they were not entitled, and that they were going to take those cases to the Elections Tribunal. But, when they came to investigate, they found that they had not a leg to stand on. The consequence was, that, while after previous elections several cases went to the Elections Tribunal, after the last two elections not a single case was taken to that tribunal. The conduct of the presiding officers and of the electors had been as straightforward at the last two elections as at any previous election.

Mr. GREEN: As matters connected with Northern electorates have been mentioned, it was only right that he should speak on that vote. In the first place, he desired to pay a tribute to the returning officer at Townsville and all his assistants. They did their duty well, conscientiously, and with justice to every party. He was surprised to find some hon. members apparently objecting to a clean and up-to-date roll. A letter had been read which was written by Mr. H. G. Bradley. He could not see anything objectionable in that letter. It was only trying to get the right names on the right rolls. If an electoral officer did not do his duty in getting right names on the roll——

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you suggest that?

Mr. GREEN: No; he did not suggest anything like that. But if Mr. Bradley knew that certain people had shifted from one electorate to another, he was quite justified in notifying those persons, so that they could get on the right roll, and so that the rolls could be made clean and brought up to date. Without speaking detrimentally of any returning officer or any electoral officer, he had no hesitation in saying that the rolls were not up-to-date, and they were not as clean as they might be. In connection with the Federal rolls, electors were constantly being notified that they had failed to have their names transferred, and they were summoned for breaches of the Act. If that were done by the State Electoral Office, he felt sure that they would have clean and up-to-date rolls when the elections came on, and there would be no necessity for having supplementary lists issued at the last moment. He had two rolls in his hand of electorates at the two ends of the State, and yet they both contained the name of a prominent police officer as an elector. On the Warwick roll for 1920, he found the name "Kenny, Henry Butler, senior sergeant of police." On the Burke roll for 1920, he found the name "Kenny, Henry Butler, Normanton, sub-inspector of police." He was not arguing that Sub-inspector Kenny voted in both those electorates, but he contended that it was evident that the rolls were not kept up-to-date. Between the dates when his name was inserted on those two rolls Inspector Kenny was resident in Townsville

[5.30 p.m.] for two years. Everybody knew that, in many cases, names were duplicated on the electoral rolls, and it should be the object of everyone to have clean rolls. If rolls were kept up to date, they would not be in the position of having a tremendous number of names run on to the supplementary rolls. To-morrow or next week a member of the House might die, and, in that case, if the rolls were not kept up to date, there might be hundreds of voters in an electorate who would be disfranchised. They should either adopt the Federal system of keeping the rolls clean and up to date, or bring in some new electoral system which would accomplish that object. If they looked at the rolls for the Northern division, they would find that 1,247 names were put on the supplementary roll for Townsville. That number represented 20 per cent. of the total number of electors on the roll. In the electorate of Mundingburra, 1,078 names, or 16 per cent. of the total number of electors on the roll, were put on the supplementary roll.

An HONOURABLE MEMBER: How many were taken off?

Mr. GREEN: If there were any names taken off at that time they should have been taken off previously. They should keep their rolls clean from day to day. At any rate, the rolls should be kept up to date. The Federal authorities sent out monthly notices, and they might do the same thing with regard to State electoral rolls. In the electorate of Cairns 1,566 names were added on the supplementary roll, in the electorate of Mackay 1,094, in the Herbert 2,048, and in the Bowen electoral district 1,419 names were added to the supplementary rolls. In every one of those cases the names should have been added to the rolls at different stages of the year. If the law was such that the names could not be added except at the last moment, then the law should be amended so that they should be able to keep their rolls clean and up to date.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Hon. members opposite had talked a good deal about clean rolls. In his opinion rolls should be considered not clean if there had been a number of cases of impersonation at an election, but hon. members had not proved that there had been anything of the kind. They had stated that there were a number on the roll which ought not to be on the roll.

Mr. GREEN: Who stated that?

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member himself had not been fair. The hon. member quoted a number of names which were added to the supplementary rolls in certain electorates. Would he say that those persons had no right to have their names on the roll?

Mr. GREEN: No, I would not.

Mr. COLLINS: Did not the hon. member know that the supplementary rolls contained the names of persons whose names had been erased. Speaking as the representative of one of the largest electorates in North Queensland, he had no complaint to make with regard to the rolls. He did not allow his mind to get into such a state that would allow him to think that men would go to the polls and vote more than once, no matter what party they belonged to. Why did not hon. members be fair? The figures quoted by the hon. member for Townsville were quoted from the hon. member's political bible, "The Townsville Bulletin," but they knew that if the "Bulletin" had its way those names would not be on the roll at all. That was the grievance the newspaper had, and hon. members opposite seemed to have a similar grievance. They did not want the men who were the real wealth producers of the State to get their names on the supplementary rolls. With regard to the appointment of returning officers and presiding

officers, he was one of those who believed that people of their own political faith had just as much right to be appointed returning officers and presiding officers as people belonging to the political faith of hon. members opposite. He had now represented the electorate of Bowen in three Parliaments, and he could remember the time when there was not a single Labour man who acted as presiding officer in the whole of that electorate. Returning officers and presiding officers ought not to be drawn from people of one political faith, and if Labour men had been appointed as presiding officers, it was only a fair thing. Had any hon. member been able to prove that he did not get a fair deal from a presiding officer who was a supporter of the Labour party? He could say that Tory presiding officers had given him a fair deal. Those who represented large country electorates had often to accept squatters as presiding officers. That was so in his own electorate at places where he had never attempted to appoint a scrutineer, owing to the fact that he could not send a scrutineer there. That was the condition of things in some of the outlying portions of the Bowen electorate which he had never visited, and at which he had nevertheless always got a majority of votes, as the intelligent electors realised that they were voting for an intelligent and honest chap. (Hear, hear!) In his opinion, the Queensland electoral law was a long way ahead of the Federal electoral law. Some hon. members urged that there should be one roll for the Federal and State electorates. Years ago, when he was sitting in Opposition, the late Mr. Ryland, who at one time represented Gympie, advocated that there should be one roll for both State and Federal elections. He was not going to favour the Federal roll unless it was up to date. It must be right up to date. At the last Federal election in the Herbert, he knew that the Federal roll was not up to date, because many people went to vote and found that their names were not on the roll. Was that the kind of roll that hon. members opposite wanted? He remembered in days gone by, when members opposite had the control of the electoral machinery of the State, when men went to the polls to record their vote they found that their names were not there at all. It has been said by members opposite that the Government do not represent the large electorates in the State. He and the hon. member for Mundingburra represented two very large electorates in North Queensland. They were two large electorates, so it could not be said that only small electorates were on the Government side. Members of the Opposition side represented electorates small in area and also small so far as numbers were concerned. A redistribution of seats was bound to come about some day. What the North Queensland representatives had been trying to do was to get the North ready. This Government had done a lot by restarting operations at Chillagoe, and by means of opening up North Queensland to increase the population there. When the line was opened to the Bowen coalfields, there would be 500 to 1,000 coalminers employed there within two years, and when they established the iron and steel works at Bowen there would be thousands of men employed there, so that, instead of North Queensland losing in numbers when the redistribution took place, they would be able to hold their own so far as population was concerned. (Hear, hear!) He knew what happened when the redistribution of seats took place in 1912 and North Queensland lost two members. The Government were acting on right lines so far as the redistribution of seats was concerned. The redistribution of seats would take place at the right time. They would take place when the Government said so and not when the Opposition said so, and no injustice would be done to the North. He was not arguing that the North should have greater representation in the House, although he agreed with the hon. member for Queenton when he said that the outlying portions should be considered. He was one of those who believed from the reading of history that the future of democracy would, to a large extent, depend on the towns and cities. He (Mr. Collins) had never been in favour of giving too large a proportion of representation to the country than to the cities. He knew that the fighting force, so far as democracy was concerned, came from the cities and towns. He admitted that there should be some difference as regards representations for the towns and for the country, but he was not going to favour a great difference, knowing as he did that the home of democracy was in the cities and towns.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. member for Oxley stated that there were 64,000 more names on the State roll than on the Federal roll, but the official figures showed that the difference was only 34,000. It was quite easy to understand that there would be a difference between the two rolls, because of the method adopted by the Commonwealth authorities of putting people off the roll as soon as they went out of the electorate. If the State did the same thing, they would have a large number of electors disfranchised.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They would be placed on the roll of the electorate they went to.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Members of the Opposition generally had——

Mr. FLETCHER: Been fair——

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. He was glad to learn from hon. members opposite that there had been no impersonation and no duplication at the recent elections. That was in striking contrast with the criticisms of the Tory papers immediately after the election. Anyone reading the daily papers a day or two after the elections would think that the Government had been indulging in an orgy of corruption, but the testimony of hon. members on both sides of the House, representing all parties, showed that there had been neither duplication nor impersonation. That was a good thing, because it was only right that they should recognise the fair name of Queensland should be protected by all parties. (Hear, hear!) The hon. member for Merthyr referred to the position of the Merthyr roll. That roll was a fairly good one, because within three weeks of the general election a liquor referendum took place, and he would quote the figures to show that it was a good roll. In a general election, with the personal interest involved and with contending parties, there would always be a larger vote than would be the case when they were voting on an abstract question. On election day there were 7,540 names on the Merthyr roll. Of

that number 6,254 voted, leaving a balance of 1,286. The collection of names by the police had only been taken just before the election, and there was no time to make the erasures. It was found that there were 482 erasures to be made from the roll of electors who had died or who had transferred to other electorates or who had left the State altogether. That brought the number of people who did not vote down to 804. That showed that the Merthyr poll represented a vote of 88.6 per cent.

Mr. MACGREGOR: We make it 92 per cent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The official figures showed that 88.6 per cent. of the electors voted. Three weeks later the vote on the liquor referendum took place. Altogether 6,099 people voted at the referendum. The percentage of electors voting representing 86.4 per cent. That showed there were only 155 more votes cast at the State election than were cast at the liquor referendum. As stated before, it was only natural that when the member for Merthyr and Mr. McLachlan were fighting for their political lives, there would be a higher percentage of votes than there would be on an abstract question.

Mr. MACGREGOR: You say 88 per cent. The point is, where is the other 12 per cent.?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are the people who did not vote.

Mr. MACGREGOR: But are they in the electorate?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Some of them did not vote and some of them were absent. He would give them an analysis of the whole of the State by the same process of reasoning. There were, approximately, 424,487 voters on the roll on the 9th October. Of that number 351,832 persons voted and there were 3,500 informal, making a total of 355,332. There were three electorates with 20,537 voters, in which nobody voted, and if they assumed an 80 per cent. vote for those electorates, which was a low comparison, it would equal 16,429, which would bring the grand total up to 371,761. Therefore, the percentage who voted at the 1920 election would be 87.5 per cent., very near the average for Merthyr. Those figures, compared with the figures for the liquor referendum, proved that in each of the seventy-two electorates there was a bigger vote at the State election than on an abstract question. On the liquor referendum out of 424,439 voters the number of votes was 359,449, equalling 84.6 per cent. of the whole of the State. If they took the whole of the electorates they would only find that 171 more persons voted in each electorate on the State election than on the liquor referendum. Those figures might be used as a fair check to show that, after all, there was honest voting and no impersonation or duplication. For the benefit of the member for Oxley, he wanted to show the fallacy of comparing the Commonwealth figures with the State figures. The Commonwealth figures on 30th October were 390,444. Taking the figures that hon. member had given of those who voted and 80 per cent. of the electors in the electorates in which nobody voted, they would get a total of 371,161 who voted. That would mean if the Commonwealth figures were right that 95.21 per cent. of the people voted, and they all knew that was absurd.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Why?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There had never been a 95 per cent. poll.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You have never had the true figures.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He was quite prepared to allow the hon. gentleman to examine them. He wanted the hon. gentleman to understand that he had to take his figures of those who were on the Federal roll and the figures he himself had already given and which had been verified by the Chief Electoral Officer. Taking those figures, it would mean that 95.21 per cent. of the people of Queensland had voted, if Federal roll figures were correct.

Mr. FLETCHER: If you had a clean roll, you would get 98 per cent.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They knew from their experience of Federal and State elections that that was not likely to happen.

Mr. SIZER: Your argument is going to support the argument for the member for Oxley.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Not at all. The figures were there, and the hon. gentleman could examine them. The hon. member for Merthyr had had something to say about the minority representation of the Government party, and he (Mr. Mullan) thought it was time that the real figures were submitted, because the idea was that hon. gentlemen opposite had a 20,000 majority.

Mr. MACGREGOR: I say you represent the minority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If the contentions put forward in the House again and again were sound, the leader of the Opposition should hand over to the member for Bulimba the leadership of the other party, because, as a matter of fact, the Nationalists represented 79,000, whilst the Country party represented only 57,000.

Mr. MACGREGOR: How many do you represent out of all the votes?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They represented a great deal more than the parties opposite got. The figures were as follow:—

		Seats.
Labour	168,160	
Less contingents	171	
	167,989	... 38
Anti-Labour—		
Nationalists	79,534	... 12
Country party ...	57,907	... 18
Northern Country party	23,870	... 2
Independent Country party	5,465	... 1
Soldier Nationalist ...	9,577	... 1
National Labour ...	7,101	... 0
Independents ...	3,391	... 0
Industrialists ...	222	... 0
	187,067	... 72
Less contingent vote	3,224	
	183,843	
Less Labour ...	167,989	
	15,854	
Less Independent ...	3,391	
Majority ...	12,463	

If National Labour is deducted from anti-Labour and added to Labour (for whom votes were probably intended), then the majority for Labour will be 1,739.

Hon. J. Mullan.]

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (continuing): He was allowing hon. members opposite to take all the industrialists who voted in the Bremer. He hoped they would hear no more about "the minority Government." He was quite sure that the Country party would not talk about minority rule. The one party in the House which should not talk about it was the Country party, because, as he had shown, there were 79,000 Nationalists represented on the Opposition cross benches, while there were only 57,000 represented by the Country party. What he wanted to point out was that, if they went to the country to-morrow with seventy-two seats, with an equal number of votes, it might possibly follow that they would get a minority Government in power.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have got one now.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Some hon. members opposite seemed to think that inequality in the electorates necessarily led to an unequal representation in Parliament, but all past experience proved to the contrary. In the Imperial Parliament there had been over and over again a Government in power with a large majority in the House, but in a huge minority in the country.

Mr. MACGREGOR: Only three occasions.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Then, again let them take the Federal Parliament. Recently, after a certain election, they found that the Hughes party numbered thirty-eight members, as against thirty-seven members, with 177,000 votes against them. Then take the Senate. Did anybody suggest that the position was fair to-day, where one Labour man represented 1,000,000 votes, and seventeen men represented only a few votes more.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. CORSER: Why did you not change it when you were there?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They did change it. Let them take the anomalous position in Victoria. At the recent election, the Victorian Government got 387,000 votes in the country and forty-four seats, and the other party got 457,000 votes and twenty-two seats. The last party that could talk about giving expression to the will of the people to-day were hon. members opposite, because when the Labour party came into power in 1915 with a majority of eighteen, and later on in 1918 with a majority of twenty-four, hon. members opposite—in alliance with a few Tories in the other Chamber—did all they could to stultify and block the will of the people, showing that they were never prepared to give expression to the will of the people so long as they could prevent it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are not prepared to take the will of the people with regard to the Upper House.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The leader of the Opposition raised the question as to why the Government did not proceed with the prosecution of those people who failed to vote.

Mr. VOWLES: Who authorised the returning officers not to carry out the Act?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They acted in the interests of economy. (Opposition laughter.) They did exactly what the hon. gentleman desired them to do now at the by-elections for Maranoa, Leichhardt, Herbert, and Barcoo; and their experience was that it did not help them. They got a lot of explanations, but they were only in a position to prosecute four or five people in the Barcoo and Leichhardt, and nobody in the Maranoa. To have prosecuted on this occasion the enormous number who failed to vote—about 50,000—would have meant enormous expenditure, which they considered would not have been justified. (Hear, hear!)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He would not detain the vote for many seconds. The Minister had forgotten to mention that, in connection with the Legislative Council, a vote at one time was taken of the people, who turned the Government down by a very large majority, and he remembered the present Treasurer saying that he, at any rate, was going to defy the people in that particular regard. He wanted to raise another point. The hon. member had been trying to make him believe that those who were on that side of the House comprised about half a dozen parties. He knew very well that the particular organ which had been, and was now supporting him (the Attorney-General, said such was not the case. He would quote from the hon. gentleman's bible—the "Daily Standard" of Saturday, 2nd October. This was what it said with regard to the parties who were opposed to the Labour party—

> "Despite the delusive tactics of the reactionary organisations in going to the poll under several names, there is no question that there are only two parties before the people—the Labour party standing for reform and progress, and the Tory party holding to the things which are, and with the backward look of reaction."

Although the Minister had been so anxious to prove there were ever so many parties on the Opposition side of the House, he believed every man there considered that the Government of this country was such a disaster to the country that at the very first opportunity they were going to get them out and be a solid body, under whatever name they might call themselves in politics. The hon. gentleman himself knew that, as a matter of fact, the paper which everlastingly was behind him and always did its very best to help him, said there were only two parties.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You don't believe what the paper says, do you?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knew that, no matter what he might say with regard to his belief or non-belief, he himself was sworn to believe that whatever the "Standard" said was perfectly correct. The hon. gentleman for half an hour had been stonewalling his own Estimates, trying to prove something which his own paper said did not exist.

Question put and passed.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL, the following items were put and passed, without discussion:—

	£
Friendly societies	2,005
Parliamentary Draftsman ...	650
Public Service Superannuation Board	1,235
Sheriff	4,649
Stamp Duties Office	7,090
Supreme Courts	10,786.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—That £16,785 be granted for "Titles."

Mr. VOWLES: This department, in years past, had been one of the most efficient in the whole service. Of late there seemed to have been disruption in it. The delays which occurred were very vexatious. Documents did not get through as they did in the past, and the legal profession, through their association, had referred to the matter. He would like to know what the cause of the trouble was. Was it a fact that the legal head of the Titles Department could find time to leave his office to go to Townsville to participate in a Labour convention, and that that same gentleman could be spared for a couple of months to participate in a general election, and be reinstated? Why was there such an accumulation of work and such delays, leading to dissatisfaction on the part of the public? Documents which took a fortnight to get through some years ago, took up to a month now. There was no reason why that should be so. Surely the "go-slow" policy had not crept into the Titles Office. It was a matter that affected everybody who was concerned in real property. There was no question that the delay was approaching something like a scandal.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There had been an enormous increase in the work of the Titles Branch, owing to the activity in the matter of land sales in Brisbane. Regarding the absence of an officer during an election, that officer resigned his position and another very capable man was temporarily appointed, who had done the work well. He would certainly inquire into the complaint made in regard to delays, and if there were delays he would see that they were obviated.

Mr. GREEN: He noticed that the Local Deputy Registrar of Titles and Deputy Commissioner of Stamp Duties at Townsville remained on the same salary as he was previously getting, when he was receiving less than the man who occupied a similar position at Rockhampton. The Rockhampton man had been increased. In the North the increase in the cost of living was manifested more than it was anywhere else, yet the gentleman stationed there remained on the same mark. Evidently more work was going to be thrown upon him, because there was going to be a reduction in the staff.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The salaries paid were the award rates. Had the gentleman who was in Townsville previously remained there, he would have gone to a higher salary; but a junior man had come on in his place.

Mr. MAXWELL noticed that the Registrar of Titles, who was some time ago promoted from the position of Commissioner for Stamps, was now receiving £575, while the Commissioner for Stamps was in receipt of £650. He might be wrong, but he was under the impression that the position of Registrar of Titles was looked upon as a higher position than that of Commissioner for Stamps. At all events, some time ago, the Commissioner for Stamps was promoted to the position of Registrar of Titles. It looked rather like an Irishman's rise.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Although there appeared to be no increase in the salary of Mr. Bradfield, the Commissioner of Titles, his salary actually had been increased from £550 to £575. Of course, the Commissioner for Stamps had received a bigger increase, which was given for some special service.

Mr. MAXWELL: Had it not always been a recognised fact in the service that the position of Registrar of Titles was above that of Commissioner for Stamps? And if that was so, it seemed a peculiar anomaly that the gentleman occupying the position of Registrar of Titles should receive a lesser salary than the Commissioner for Stamps.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was no special recognition of the office of Registrar of Titles.

Mr. MAXWELL: The Registrar of Titles was promoted to that position from the position of Commissioner for Stamps.

Mr. TAYLOR: He noticed there was an increase of four in the number of employees in the department, and he would like the Minister to explain what was the reason for those new appointments.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: As he had stated earlier, there had been an enormous increase in the amount of work in the department in connection with transfers due to increased land sales, particularly around Brisbane.

Mr. KING: He would like to emphasize the remarks of the hon. member for Toowong. To those who were in the habit of doing business with the Registrar of Titles office, it seemed incomprehensible that the Registrar of Titles should be getting the small salary that he was. As a matter of fact, the Registrar of Titles, before he was promoted to that position, was Commissioner for Stamps. He had not a word to say against either officer, but what he could not understand was that the Registrar of Titles being taken from the position of Commissioner for Stamps with a view to promotion should be getting a lower salary than the Commissioner for Stamps. They were both excellent officers, but an injustice had been done to Mr. Bradfield in not giving him greater recognition.

Mr. BRENNAN: Up till recently it was a dual position held by one man, but some four years ago the position was divided. There was no distinction before that.

Question put and passed.

THE TREASURER.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) moved—That £56,910 be granted for "Treasury." It would be seen that he was asking for a lesser amount this year than was granted last year. No doubt those acquainted with the financial side of the question would notice that they were asking a good deal more for commissions, exchanges, etc. That was necessary on account of the anticipated cost of transferring money to London, but he hoped the amount would not be necessary. The transfer of money at the present time was rather an expensive business. It would be noticed, of course, that the amount of £13,000 odd for increases to salaries of general and professional officers in all departments was not included this year, but there was an item of £4,000 for a somewhat similar purpose. Again, the amount asked for last year on account of the purchase of the trawler did not appear this year. They did not want another trawler. Then the amount for compensation in connection with the loss of the steamer "Llewellyn," previously stationed at Rockhampton, did not

appear this year. Members would see that the department had paid due regard to economy, and the only increase outside the wages increase was the amount they were asking to be made available for extra commissions and exchanges. He should be very glad to enlighten hon. members with regard to any other item as they went along.

HON. W. H. BARNES: On this vote it would be good if they were able to look at what one might call the bigger side of the Treasury rather than at the mere details of the office. At this time it was essential that they should recognise the position, not with a view of trying to pull things to pieces, but rather with a view to assisting with suggestions that might be helpful so far as the country was concerned. No one who had followed the trend of things financially could be other than concerned with regard to some of the things that were facing the community at present, and he would like to refer to what was revealed in the Treasurer's tables, page 26, in connection with maturing loans. It would be found from these tables that in 1922 there were maturing £2,859,750; in 1924, £13,000,000 odd; and in 1925, £12,000,000 odd. Being so near to the time of maturity, the question arose, "What is likely to be done?" It was a vital matter to the State, and the present was an opportune time for discussing it. Bearing in mind the tremendous debt of £70,000,000 on a small community, it seemed to him they must face the question of borrowing less.

The TREASURER: We are facing that all right.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Could they go on adding to the load unless they did one of several things? One, of course, was to get others to come here to help them carry the burden. He wanted to get plainly and broadly to the fact that in his judgment they had to get back to first principles. Probably the Treasurer and many hon. members on the other side would not agree with him when he said that they had to encourage private enterprise and industry.

The TREASURER: No person will disagree with you in that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The policy of the Government had been directly the opposite of that.

The TREASURER: That is where we disagree with you.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The policy of the Government had been to clip the wings of persons who were willing to help to develop Queensland, whereas if they wished to make the strides they ought to make they must give more and more encouragement to them. If not, he believed they would fail Queensland. The Labour party had to recognise that if a young country was to prosper she must encourage people to help her to develop.

What was the position with regard to loan moneys? The Treasurer the other night interjected that if certain things were not done they were going to take it—referring to the loan.

The TREASURER: Perfectly obvious.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was a very unwise interjection.

The TREASURER: What is the good of acting the ostrich?

HON. W. H. BARNES: If somebody came to the Treasurer with a pistol and presented it at him, what would he do?

The TREASURER: There is no pistol.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He believed there was sufficient fighting instinct in the hon. member to make him take up the cudgels and say he was not going to do what he was required to do.

The TREASURER: What is the use of being hypocritical over the matter?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He wished to draw attention to another thing which had a great deal to do with finance. The Government had been spending a lot of money, although they might say that the debentures they had been issuing had to cover the cost to a very considerable extent. What was the return on the State stations?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must see that if he wishes to discuss the administration of the State stations and the amount of loan money expended thereon he should do so under that particular vote. If I permitted members to discuss all the matters the hon. member apparently wants to discuss, we would get away from the subject-matter of this vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Of course, he would respect the ruling of the Chairman, but his feeling was that the position was not satisfactory, and if a way could be shown out of the difficulty every public man should endeavour to show such a way out. His final word would be that there must be more co-operation between the Government and private enterprise, because the State would go back unless the hostile policy of the Government were altered.

The TREASURER: You are becoming a real pessimist about nationalisation.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not, but he was seeking to show a way out to a Government who were apparently incapable of seeing it, or unwilling to see it.

Although, as the Minister told them, the vote showed a reduction on the previous year, the reduction was brought about by the fact that there was no vote for the trawler this year, that there was no vote of £13,000 for increases to salaries, and there was no vote, happily, in connection with the disaster to the "Llewellyn." Those amounted to, approximately, £32,000, which, if added to the £56,000, really meant that the vote was increased very much this time.

The TREASURER: We have put on £18,000 for commission, exchange, etc.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He thought they ought to know whether that item was to cover the flotation of the loan.

The TREASURER: Not here.

HON. W. H. BARNES: In that case, he would like to know why that increase was there?

The TREASURER: That will be expended in transferring money to London to pay interest on our debt.

HON. W. H. BARNES: But the fact was patent that there was an additional amount of £18,000 on the Estimates for that purpose, and he had the impression that it had to do with the flotation of the loan. He also noticed an increase in the vote for postage, telegrams, and general contingencies from £1,000 to £1,500. He would like

to know how much had been spent from that vote last year, and whether £1,500 was likely to be sufficient this year? The salary vote was increased, and he did not think anyone would take exception to the increases. At the same time, he noticed that the number of officers was increased from forty to forty-two. Why had it been necessary to increase the number of clerks when one important branch of Government business—the Savings Bank—had been handed over to the Commonwealth?

The TREASURER: That does not affect the head office. The Commissioner of the Savings Bank was absolutely independent.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The head office exercised control over all the subdepartments of the Treasury, so that the withdrawal of the Savings Bank must have affected the amount of work done by the head office. Perhaps, the hon. gentleman could explain why the increase was made.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: One statement made by the Treasurer was rather startling; that was, that in future they were going to have to send money from Queensland to London.

The TREASURER: We have been doing that for years.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Not so much. All previous loans had been floated in London, and some of the loan money had been retained there, and money had been sent from Queensland in the form of products of the State. It would be a great mistake to float all future loans in Queensland and have to send large sums of money to London to meet interest on past loans.

The TREASURER: We are not sending money to London. We are paying exchange on money.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the Treasurer was going to be compelled to pay 6½ per cent. interest on money borrowed in Queensland, farmers and other producers would have to pay something like 8 per cent. on loans. He pointed that out to the late Treasurer immediately he offered 6 per cent. for money in Queensland. Some people might think it a very good thing to float loans in Queensland, but he thought it was a great mistake. Instead of the Treasurer grabbing every £1 he could get and spending it in Queensland on enterprises that would not be reproductive——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss the question of how the Treasurer is going to spend loan money.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What he desired to talk about was the seriousness of floating loans in Queensland and then having to transfer large sums of money to England. In the interests of the producer, and everyone in the State, the Government should borrow every £1 they could outside of the State, and allow the money in Queensland to be used in production and the extension of local industries. They ought to be able to make three times the interest that they paid on loan money, and so they would if the money were not wasted. It was only with Governments like the present, who wasted money, that they were unable to pay interest on it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This was a vote which should be approached in all seriousness, because in the Treasury Department rested to a very large extent the welfare of the community as a whole, and in times like the present the responsibilities of the Treasurer were very great indeed. They should all do their best to assist the hon. gentleman, because it was unthinkable that the Opposition should conceive it to be its duty to harass the Treasurer at a time when the State looked for concerted action to put and to maintain affairs on a stable basis. The Treasurer should avoid doing anything likely to interfere with the wheels of industry, and, on the other hand, he had a depleted exchequer. It reminded one of an expression to which the hon. gentleman put his pen some years ago, when he said—

> "Finance of the home is only different from the finance of the State in the magnitude of the latter."

He had no doubt the Treasurer knew how to finance his home, but he had yet to prove that he could finance the State in the same able manner, and he hoped, when the numbers went up, that they would have cause to congratulate the hon. gentleman. Two of the qualifications which were called for in a Treasurer at the present moment were firmness and caution. It was very nice for a Treasurer to tell deputations who came to him with requests for loans for developmental purposes to go ahead and incur their liabilities and that the Treasurer would be behind them. A good deal of that had been done in the past, but now the Treasurer had to argue and reason with disappointed applicants for advances. That called for firmness and caution, and he hoped that in the present Treasurer they would have a man who could exercise those qualities to the fullest extent. One thing that was necessary was confidence. They could not refrain from uttering that caution at every possible opportunity. Confidence was what was wanted at the present time. It was all very well for hon. gentlemen opposite to say that they were acting quite in accordance with their platform and their conception of things. Possibly they were; but, when they saw that the exercise of those principles was cutting into the confidence of investors and of the people who controlled finance throughout the world, surely it was time to study the situation. They could play with the destinies of the State up to a certain point; but, when they saw the danger signal right ahead, it was time to put the interests of the whole community in the forefront and cease to study the interests of one section of the community. In that regard he wanted to refer briefly to a few remarks which appeared in the "Financial News" quite recently. That journal, after commenting upon gilt-edged stocks generally, went on to say—

> "It is noted in the consol market that Mr. Theodore has been returned in Queensland by an extremely narrow majority, and this is accepted as an indication that sanity still rules in the counsels of the colony. Were it not for the elements of doubt which Mr. Theodore, as Queensland Premier, has succeeded in introducing into the confidence we have always felt for Australian securities, one might point out several cheap stocks in this particular section."

Probably one might be tempted to turn round and say that was the opinion of the Tory capitalistic Press, and so on. Probably that would be the retort of unthinking members opposite, but they had to consider that that journal was one of the mouthpieces

of the financial world of Great Britain, and that the action of the present Government during the last five years had tended to cut into confidence in the State.

The TREASURER: Last December our loan was subscribed twice over.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That was twelve months ago, and a great deal of water had run under the bridge since then, with the result that the confidence which investors would otherwise feel had probably been cut into. He was very serious on this matter, and he said that it was up to the Treasurer now—and up to those behind him—to go slow in finance, to establish confidence, and to use caution, and not pour money into all the channels of expenditure which came before them. He wished briefly to refer to the loan of £2,000,000 which was now practically on the market. He thought that the hon. member for Toowong, in offering his services as mayor, politician, and citizen to assist in this loan, was doing the right thing. Speaking for himself—and he believed for other members of the Opposition—he thought it was the duty of every member who had any ability whatever to place his services at the command of the State in this particular matter. There was no satisfaction in members sitting back and watching the Government's failure in this loan. The loan must be successful, and members ought to do all they possibly could to see that the loan was subscribed. Was it not a fact that the whole of this £2,000,000 was practically earmarked for certain purposes, and that before the ink was dry on the application forms they would have to turn round and ask for a further loan? There was £1,000,000 of this loan at short call in the Government Savings Bank.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the hon. member is quite in order in discussing how the loan to be subscribed must be expended. I called the hon. member for Bulimba to order on that point, and I should not be doing my duty in allowing the hon. member for Oxley to discuss the matter; otherwise there will be an interminable discussion on the subject.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He bowed to the ruling of the Chairman.

The TREASURER: I should have liked to have enlarged on the matter, but I was not allowed to do so.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the hon. gentleman was not allowed to discuss the matter, of course he (Mr. Elphinstone) could not be allowed to do so.

Mr. BRENNAN: A Pierpont Morgan!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He would sooner be a Pierpont Morgan than a silo expert. (Laughter.) He noticed that the estimated excess expenditure for twelve months as compared with last year was £64,000, and that for the five months ending 30th November the amount expended was £43,000; so that if that rate was maintained there would be an increase for the year which would amount to over £100,000. Possibly, the Treasurer would be able to show that unusual expenditure had cropped up during the past five months, and that the rate of increase he mentioned would not be maintained during the year. There was one other matter he would like to refer to, and that was the matter of income tax. In his humble opinion, the Treasurer was going to be faced with a somewhat difficult task in the collection of income tax. During the past few years he had had no difficulty in that regard, as the revenue had been extremely buoyant, but he very much doubted if the present position would be maintained. It was just as well that they should look at what had happened in other parts of the world in this connection.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot follow that line of argument on the vote now before the Committee.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He was only trying to embrace all Treasury questions, so that he should not have to deal with the financial question in sections.

The CHAIRMAN: That might be all right if hon. members had agreed to have a general discussion on the first vote on the Estimates; but hon. members had decided to have a discussion on each vote as it came before the Committee, and, that being so, he must adhere to his previous decision to confine the discussion to the vote under consideration.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It would be rather a difficult thing to deal with this important matter in sections, and that was why he wished to deal with it in one speech. However, he must postpone what he had intended to say and deal with the matter in sections.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): After the experience the hon. member for Oxley had had in connection with the Fruit Growers' Society and the Darra Cement Company, he hoped that the hon. member would not be appointed at £10 per week to assist in the flotation of the loan, as was done by the Federal Government in connection with the Commonwealth loan. In dealing with a matter of this kind, it was most important that they should consider the Treasury returns rather than such "wild-cat" schemes as the hon. member for Oxley had been associated with.

Mr. TAYLOR: He noticed that in this vote there was an item of £530 for the accountant and registrar at Government Savings Bank inscribed stock. There was also an item of £2,085 for eight inspectors of weights and measures, and further down there was an item of £1,000 for travelling and other expenses in connection with the administration of the Weights and Measures Act. That made a total of £3,085. He should like to know where those inspectors were located—whether in the metropolis or in the country districts—and what duties they performed?

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): The Treasury staff were a most capable staff, and they were doing their duty to the public. He noticed that it was intended to spend £4,300,000 from Loan Fund during the current year. All that he could do was to ask the Treasurer to see that the money was expended judiciously. He would like to know the intentions of the Government regarding the Sinking Fund. Some time ago the Sinking Fund was suspended, and everyone would agree that it was time it was re-established. He knew the Chairman would not allow him to discuss the loan.

The PREMIER: You can discuss it on the Loan Vote.

Mr. VOWLES: It appeared to him that the loan money they were asking for was already earmarked for expenditure that was taking place. They knew they had to pay

£1,000,000 in London; they also had to pay £1,000,000, which was at call at the Savings Bank, and £550,000, which was not yet provided for, in connection with accumulated deficits. It was a matter for the Government to say how the £2,000,000 loan would be spent, but he felt certain that they would finish up the year still owing the £1,000,000 in London, as well as the accumulated deficit and the amount at call in the Savings Bank.

Mr. PETERSON: Seeing that the Treasurer was taking over the administration of the advances to workers' dwellings and the advances to settlers, he would like to know how the business was going to be carried on during the recess. As a country member, it would be interesting to him to know what was going to be done, and he would like an assurance from the Treasurer that arrangements had been made in connection with the administration of that fund.

Mr. CORSER: The question of advances to settlers was one of great advantage to his district. The electors in the Burnett would like to know the intentions of the Government. He had been reading the Treasurer's remarks, and noticed that he intended to establish a rural bank, and that he proposed to issue debentures to the extent of £5,000,000. The Treasurer had already authority to issue that amount. He supposed that the administration of the fund would be handed over to some Under Secretary, and it would be under the control of that official, just the same as it had been under the control of some Under Secretary in the past. He would like to know if there had been any arrangements made in connection with the administration of that fund. The Government had bartered away the Savings Bank and they had made no arrangements for advancing money to settlers. All the operations were practically suspended at the present time, and no advances were going through at all. Many advances had been made for money, accompanied by the necessary deposits, but the Government had taken no action and no money was being advanced at present. He would like to know if the Government intended to put the institution on a solid working foundation. Inspections had been made and all necessary preliminaries carried out, and the settlers wanted to know when they were going to get the advances they were entitled to.

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

Mr. DUNSTAN took the chair as Temporary Chairman.

Mr. CORSER: Queensland was the only State which handed over its Savings Bank to the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: You are wrong.

Mr. CORSER: Tasmania was the only other State. The other four States still kept control of their Savings Bank. He hoped the Government would start operations again, and make the necessary advances. With one scratch of the pen they could make the wheels go round and continue to lend money as they did before. At the present time, the farmers could not get any money at all from the private banks. The private banking institutions were not going to run any risks in connection with the £2,000,000 loan which the Government were asking for. Owing to the proposed flotation of that loan, the farmers were not able to get any money from the private banks at all, and that was one good reason why the Government should make the necessary arrangements quickly and allow the farmers to obtain advances which the Act provided for them.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Treasurer had made a very wise statement when referring to the condition of things to-day, which, probably, was to indicate that it was no use the ostrich hiding his head. He imagined from that statement that the Treasurer was alive to the seriousness of the finances of the State. Open confession was good for the soul. With regard to the £18,000 difference in the "Commission, Exchange, etc.," he imagined that that amount was to be utilised in the transmission of money to repay the Bank of England for the short loan account. It looked very much like it, and it was just as well to put their finger on it. They might hope that possibly exchanges would be effected during the year with less cost than at present.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is an indication of the want of confidence that the old country people have in the Government.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Not wishing to hide the head of the Treasury one bit, and not wishing to do any injury, he would like to say that it seemed to him that the Treasurer's Financial Statement and the statement of the Auditor-General did not agree. There were items mentioned by the Auditor-General which were passed over entirely by the Treasurer.

The TREASURER: Where am I wrong?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Auditor-General referred to a sum of £1,000,000 obtained on short loan from the Savings Bank Commissioner. The Treasurer made no reference to it. He made no reference to the £3,080,000 or to the sum which was forthcoming to them as a result of the transfer. He (Mr. Barnes) referred to cash balances, because that was what most concerned them. They would be entirely dependent upon what might be forthcoming in various directions to carry on during the year. They would see on page 16 of the Auditor-General's report that they simply had a credit balance of £35,927 at the end of the year. Since that time £1,000,000 had been received from the Bank of England. There was an anticipated loan of £2,000,000, and they had a further sum of Savings Bank money amounting to £3,050,000, which, he imagined, was now available to the Government. No doubt that business was transferred in order that the State might have full use of the full Savings Bank credit, which was, at the time the Bill passed through the House, £3,080,000. He tried to get later information regarding the Trust and Loan Funds, but the Treasurer was not good enough to give it to-day; but according to the returns already given to the Press, he found that on Trust Accounts they had received £1,757,870. The total of those figures, including the Savings Bank £3,050,000 and £35,927 carried forward at the 30th June, and the £2,000,000 anticipated loan, made altogether a total of £6,873,797. They had already expended up to the end of the previous month on Loan Account £1,975,932, and on Trust Account £1,944,750. They had still to pay to the Bank of England the £1,000,000 borrowed on short date account, and they had £225,000 to pay on railway account. Those were the only figures available, and they amounted to £5,145,682. They were, therefore, left

with a cash balance in sight, including the £2,000,000 yet to be raised, of only £1,628,115. That was how the cash balance appeared to date. If they excluded the £2,000,000 which the Treasurer contemplated raising—and there was no doubt he would raise it because every good citizen should help in the interests of the State to raise the money—(Hear, hear!)—they were £261,885 to the bad.

The PREMIER: How do you think we carry on?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He thought they were carrying on by an overdraft from somewhere—he did not know where.

The TREASURER: Then people must have a lot of confidence in us to give us an overdraft.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Their books showed that the Queensland National Bank made advances from time to time. In any case, those were all the figures that were available. He was not speaking in any captious way, because things were too serious. When the Premier delivered his opening speech in the House, he indicated that there was no use burking things—that things were serious. It was seen by the confession of the Premier some time ago and by the confession of the Treasurer in the House that afternoon. He would ask the Treasurer, in order to inspire confidence and not hide the head of the Treasury one bit, to let them know exactly what was the position of the cash balance. He had simply taken as the foundation of any remarks he had made the Auditor-General's statement. He had given credit of sums that were to come and sums received, and he had deducted the outgoings, according as they had been revealed from time to time. It might be that they had received sums of money which they had not indicated to the world. If so, he would ask the Treasurer to let the House know the position truly and fairly. No one could dispute the figures he had quoted—they appeared in the Press of 1st December last. Reference had also been made to the Savings Bank that full credit had been given for the amount which had been transferred, and which, he imagined, was in the hands of the Treasurer. Of course, that business was useful in order to have free access to the full amount in the Savings Bank.

The PREMIER: Did you take that £3,080,000 into account?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He had taken that £3,080,000 into account. If there was any error, it was only proper that they should be put right on the matter. There was nothing of so much importance to-day as the cash balances of the State.

The TREASURER: I will have a manuscript copy ready for you in about a week.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That was too late. The House had a right to know before it rose where they stood in regard to finance. Even if they got the £2,000,000, he maintained that they would only have an expenditure during the year of £1,628,165, unless further sums were forthcoming from the sales of debentures. He understood that the Treasurer stated to-day, in answer to the question he put, that there was £65,000 from that source, but that amount was neither here nor there. The whole matter was sufficiently serious to demand from the Treasurer, or the Premier, a clear statement of the financial position as regarded cash balances, and he hoped that the Treasurer would see fit to disclose the exact position of the exchequer.

Mr. CORSER: Surely the Treasurer was going to make some statement. He was particularly interested in a statement made by the Treasurer on the second reading of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Bill this session.

The PREMIER: You cannot quote from a debate of the House this session.

Mr. CORSER: He was not quoting, but only taking care to make it quite clear what the Treasurer stated in the House some time ago.

The PREMIER: Then, you ought to quote his remarks.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman knew that he could not quote from "Hansard" of this session. In connection with advances under the Workers' Dwellings Act and the Agricultural Bank Act, the Treasurer stated that, later in the session, the Agricultural Bank would be developed into what would turn out to be a most effective Rural Bank, but he had not given them any indication of what had been done. He had stripped the whole of the machinery away from the present advances to settlers system, and had not supplied anything in its place, and he expected them to go into recess without getting a reply.

The TREASURER: Can't you wait until we come to the vote.

Mr. CORSER: No, he was prepared to take it now, which was the proper time. The hon. gentleman claimed that the whole of the operations would be under a corporation—the Treasurer—who would hand over the administration to the Agricultural Bank, and allot the amount of money which it was considered would be sufficient for carrying on this institution. A member of the Country party could not help objecting to the Agricultural Bank having the say as to what money should be advanced to settlers, which took more than double security for the amount advanced. Why did not Parliament appropriate sufficient money to enable the institution to be of some value, and not allow the department to take such excessive security from the settlers, only giving them a loan of about 25 per cent. of the value of the security? He hoped the Treasurer would give them some indication that the settlers would have the assistance which he stated they would have.

The TREASURER: It was obvious that he would be out of order in entering upon a long discussion of advances under the Workers' Dwellings Act or advances to settlers, which purely concerned Trust Funds. As he had explained previously, there were some proposals in hand; they were not stopping the department from progressing. Some hon. members—and he was not catechising them for it—had almost attempted to deliver the speeches on this vote which should have been delivered on the Financial Statement. This was purely a head office vote. The hon. member for Bulimba referred to maturing loans, and he could be assured that the Government had that matter in hand; they had not lost sight of their responsibility, and the hon. member need not be uneasy upon the matter. He

was afraid that he would have to digress for a moment. The situation of financial stringency throughout the world, as pointed out in his Financial Statement, was one of the utmost gravity. He did not think its gravity could be exaggerated; but, at the same time, he did not think that that was a good reason for flooding the House with dreary speeches. They were doing their best to handle the problem.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: We want to help you.

The TREASURER: He trusted that the Opposition, instead of continually bursting into tears, would give some practical help. Some hon. members were already striking a pessimistic note in regard to the proposed loan. They wanted to borrow for the development of Queensland. To use the words of the hon. member for Burnett, they could not suddenly stop the wheels going round. They had got accustomed to spending sums of money annually, and they would have to continue for some time to find a fair amount to develop the country. They were offering this loan, for which the subscriptions would close about the end of January. The prospectus was published everywhere, and they wanted the co-operation of all members and all public bodies, and of the Press. It was a matter for Queensland, and not for party—a matter for their own developmental work. The Treasurer could easily get up and make one of those dreary statements; he could roll millions round the House, which very few would understand, and mix himself up in all sorts of mathematical problems.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: And the probability is that you would not understand it either. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: The probability was that no one understood the figures to-night. It was pointed out that the Auditor-General and he disagreed, and it was proved conclusively that they were both wrong. They did not want those things. Various questions were asked by hon. members. The position would be seen by the figures which he fully explained on page 2 of the Financial Statement. He had explained the reason for any increase or decrease from the figures supplied to him by the different departments. The hon. member for Windsor mentioned the matter of Savings Bank stock. That continued as at present, the Government making interest payments. The member for Bulimba also made some reference to the amount down for exchange and commission. He would give the different sums comprising the total of £25,115—

[8.30 p.m.]

	£
Exchange paid Commonwealth, account remittance to London	3,750
Exchange paid Queensland National Bank, account remittances to London	1,900
Exchange paid Queensland National Bank, account remittances from London	1,940
Management Expenses of Loans raised by Commonwealth for State	1,068
Commission to Bank of England for management of Stock and Bonds in London	13,518
Proportion of Commission and Exchange, paid to Queensland National Bank, Brisbane	2,937

They expect to have that expenditure increased considerably. It was the sort of expenditure which the Committee could be satisfied to approve of, because they did not spend it unless they wanted money in England, and had not got it there. If they did not have money there to meet their interest bill, they had to put it there. If there were £100,000 down, it would not alter the position. They paid for the money they wanted there, whatever price money was there. He did not know that any other items of importance had been touched upon except that of weights and measures. The inspectors were distributed throughout the State, and he would give full details subsequently.

Mr. TAYLOR: Do they collect any fees?

The TREASURER: The Under Secretary understood they collected fees, but he had not the information. If a service was rendered, there should be no objection to the payment of fees. If members objected to the payment of a fee for these services rendered, which might be charged in the carrying out of some legislation, let them make representations to him and he would look into the matter.

Mr. CORSER: He would like to know why the Treasurer was evading the question of their agricultural institution?

The TREASURER: Because it is not on this vote.

Mr. CORSER: What vote did it come on?

The TREASURER: Under "Trust. Advances to Settlers, and Workers' Dwellings."

Mr. CORSER: No; it did not come under advances to settlers. It came under this vote. They carried on the Agricultural Bank under a corporation known as "The Treasurer." The Treasurer claimed that he would have the power to carry on this institution—to place it under the control of the Agricultural Department. Had he done it?

The TREASURER: How could he do it in five minutes?

Mr. CORSER: How was the institution going to be carried on? They had fixed up the Savings Bank—they had bartered that away—but this institution was left without any organisation at all. There appeared to be no control. The Treasurer would allot each year the amount which would be available for this special department; he would tell the Agricultural Department how much he could advance to farmers. Had he allotted a certain amount? If so, how much? Had he taken steps to do those things?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Mr. CORSER: How much was he allotting?

The TREASURER: You cannot get that under a revenue vote.

Mr. CORSER: They could get it in here, because they could not get it in anywhere else. Was the hon. gentleman putting it under the Agricultural Department?

The TREASURER: Have you any views on that?

Mr. CORSER: He had; and he always had had.

The TREASURER: Supposing I said, "Yes" or "No"; would that alter your views?

Mr. CORSER: What he wanted to know was what the responsible head of a department had done in this direction, and how much money was appropriated. Had he made the Under Secretary responsible?

Mr. Corser.]

The TREASURER: You know that 70 per cent. of the increased deposits from the amalgamated banks will be used for this purpose.

Mr. CORSER: They knew all about that. But how much of that was going to be made available was something the Treasurer ought to make known. He also ought to say how far he had gone towards the reorganisation of this department. He claimed he would give them information as to the securing of the £5,000,000 to place a good rural bank at the advantage of the settlers during this season. They had not had one word from him, and he was passing over the only vote on which he could give the information.

The TREASURER: Did I tell you we would have a rural bank this session?

Mr. CORSER: Yes; the hon. gentleman told them he would give them the information this session. He said—

> "Later on in the session the Agricultural Bank will be elaborated and built up into what we hope will turn out to be a more efficient rural bank."

That was the statement of the Treasurer—"this session." He would not have said it was this session if he had not quoted it first, because he might not have been allowed to quote it. (Laughter.)

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member that if he descends to deception with the Chair I shall have to ask him to resume his seat. (Hear, hear!)

Mr. CORSER: He did not intend to proceed any further.

Mr. TAYLOR: He hoped the Treasurer would carry out his promise in regard to the question of weights and measures, and give all the information. It was only right that they should know exactly where that money had been expended, and whether there was any revenue derived from that expenditure; whether it was an inspection only of Government weighbridges, or private weighbridges, or what it really amounted to, and where the operations were carried out.

Question put and passed.

ANALYST.

The TREASURER moved—That £7,890 be granted for "Analyst." It would be seen that this was purely a salary department. The analyst carried on useful work, and from time to time, as the State's activities were extended, his staff was slightly increased; although, strangely enough, there was a decrease of one officer on this vote.

Mr. TAYLOR thought this was another vote on which they might have a little more information, such as to whether there were any fees collected in connection with the analyses made, and also the location of the various inspectors. In quite a number of these departments savings might be expected, and they should know more about these large expenditures.

Mr. GLEDSON: He hoped the Treasurer would not take the advice of the hon. member for Windsor and try to curtail expenditure in connection with explosives. Those connected with the mining industry and quarrying knew how necessary it was that a proper inspection of explosives should take place in order to safeguard the lives of the men engaged in those industries. It might not mean anything to those who are not connected with mining if defective explosives were used, but it meant a lot to the men engaged in the industry.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: I think you misunderstand him.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Windsor said that was one of the departments in regard to which economy should be practised, and he said the Estimates could be cut down. He (Mr. Gledson) protested against any attempt being made to barter the lives and limbs of the workers engaged in those industries. They knew in the past that many accidents had occurred through the use of defective explosives, and he hoped the Treasurer would continue the good work that the explosives inspectors were performing.

Mr. TAYLOR: He simply asked for information in regard to the vote, and said that was one vote in connection with which economy might be necesary. If it was necessary to have all those inspectors in connection with explosives, then certainly have them; but he wanted some information as to where those inspectors were situated and the duties they had to carry out, and he also wished to know if any fees were collected from the parties whose explosives were inspected by the analyst of the department.

The TREASURER said: Fees were charged by the Government to all Government departments. As to the matter of inspectors, they were really outside the department. There were no inspectors in the department. The Chief Inspector was the Government Analyst, and the other inspector mentioned was also an analyst attached to the department for the purpose of carrying out ordinary duties in connection with legislation dealing with explosives. He would commend to hon. members a very interesting document that was tabled in the House and printed—that was the report of the Chief Inspector. He had had occasion to study it himself on several occasions, and from a literary and informative point of view there were few reports to equal it.

Question put and passed.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS.

The TREASURER moved—That £4,051 be granted for "Harbours and Rivers, Subdepartment, South Brisbane." There was an increase in the vote of £616. It would be seen that there was an increase in wages of £133, and an increase in working expenses of £350, and the widow of one of the officers, the late timekeeper, was receiving a gratuity of £133. It was purely a vote in connection with the dry dock, and unless members wanted information with regard to the business done at the dry dock during last year, there was nothing more to be said.

Mr. PETERSON asked the Treasurer whether it was intended to hand over to the Commonwealth matters connected with Harbours and Rivers, particularly those connected with pilots.

The TREASURER: That matter will be adjusted when the Navigation Act comes into force.

Question put and passed.

LAND AND INCOME TAX.

The TREASURER moved—That £46,370 be granted for "Land and Income Tax." That was purely office expenses in connection

with salaries and contingencies. The salaries had increased; there was also an increased staff, and an increased cost of travelling. The present Commissioner had found it essential in the interests of revenue to increase the staff very considerably. He did not want to bring in anything that would lead to a discussion, but even now, with more than an average supernumerary staff, they found the work almost in arrears.

Mr. KERR: He noticed that there was an increase of twenty-five in the number of assessors, receivers, and clerks, and if they turned to the Estimates of last year they would find that fifty-eight additional officers were appointed then. The time had arrived when they should decide whether an increased staff was necessary. One of the most important factors in Queensland was the secondary industries, and in that connection he wished to eliminate any question as to whether they were conducted on a co-operative basis or on a copartnership basis, or as private enterprise. Every person engaged in any undertaking was out for one thing, and that was profit—and if they were going to tax that profit to any great extent it would kill industry. If they were to pay their debts by increased production and increased imports, they would be going a long way to stabilising the State. Under those circumstances, a high rate of taxation in Queensland would be a very unreasonable thing, as not only were they good customers of those oversea, but were also excellent customers of the other States. He did not say that off his own bat, or merely from personal observation; he could support his contention with statistics from Mr. Knibbs, a very handy man and an excellent authority. In 1914 their taxation was £1 8s. 2d. and in the last financial year £4 14s. 3d. per head. In that year their income tax alone totalled £2,023,316 1s. 9d., and if they were going to tax their industries at a higher rate than in the Southern States they were at a disadvantage in manufacturing. The serious position that was facing them in regard to loans was going to react upon industry in the shape of an increased bank rate, when the position was serious enough as it was. He had some figures there which he would ask the favour of the Committee to have inserted in "Hansard."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member connect his remarks with the question?

Mr. KERR: He would. They had to provide for increased assesses, which indicated increased taxation on industry, and he also wished to refer to the consolidated Income Tax Acts, 1902-1920, in which would be found a scale of taxation on company profits ranging from 1s. 3d. in the £1 where the total profits did not exceed 6 per cent. The income tax was bearing heavily on industry, and after the figures he proposed to quote he thought no Treasurer or Government would hesitate to reduce it by 50 per cent., on a sliding scale, whether the profits were derived from co-operative, private, or copartnership enterprise. He would prove that if the Committee allowed the figures, which showed the exports and imports of the various States in 1914-15, as compared with 1919-20, to go into "Hansard."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman is not in order in reading figures that do not bear on the question before the Committee.

Mr. KERR: He was sorry they did not see eye to eye. Perhaps he would have an opportunity of getting the figures in later on; they were quite entertaining. (Laughter.) They showed that whereas in New South Wales exports increased in five years by 94 per cent., Victoria by 347 per cent., South Australia 339 per cent., Western Australia 376 per cent., Tasmania 476 per cent., the exports from Queensland, where their industries were taxed out of all reason, the increase was only a "lousy" 10 per cent.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The word the hon. member has used is hardly parliamentary language.

Mr. KERR: He thought those percentages were very significant in respect to the excessive taxation that was crippling the State, particularly the secondary industries, in which he was especially interested. They needed to manufacture more and more, for increased manufacture was going to provide employment, and, of course, affect the high cost of living. Until the fundamental fact was realised, irrespective of socialistic ideas, and until the income tax on profits derived from certain industries was reduced as he had suggested, their industries would droop until they went out of existence. They could not afford increased unemployment, and without some such move there was no prospect of getting out of the financial chaos into which the Government had got them.

At fifty-five minutes after 8 o'clock p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KERR: As a step in economy, he would like to see an amalgamation of the State and Federal taxation offices. There must be some solution of the difficulty with regard to the two returns. He understood that the duplication was costing private employers and business firms half a million pounds extra a year, and it was also an expense to the Government. Throughout the election they preached economy, and they would be failing in their duty if they did not upon every opportunity drive the point home.

Mr. VOWLES supported the contention of the hon. member for Enoggera with reference to the amalgamation of the two taxation departments. The Estimates of 1918 showed that it was necessary to have only forty-five assessors and clerks; last year the number increased to fifty-eight, and this year to 133. He did not doubt that the officers were necessary, and he would like to see the department getting on a little faster with a number of matters in dispute—particularly in respect to income tax. It cost about £46,370 to run the State department, and they could only assume that it cost the Commonwealth a similar amount. Why, in the interests of economy, should there not be a consolidation? The two departments had precisely the same organisation, and the public had to send in double returns.

[9 p.m.]

Mr. HARTLEY: It is bad enough now with two, but it would be much worse if you had only one taxing authority.

Mr. VOWLES: He could not agree with the hon. gentleman. One staff could do the whole of the work, and that applied to many other departments. That was one direction in which the Government could economise. The sooner the Government realised that

people were paying taxation, both as Federal and as State citizens, the better for the community. People were paying twice for the same services, and he trusted the time was not far off when some arrangement would be made by the State and Commonwealth Governments whereby the services would cease to be duplicated.

Mr. COLLINS desired to congratulate the Commissioner upon the improvement in his report. Hon. members might remember that last session he asked a question in reference to the number of canegrowers who paid income tax, as he was very anxious to know. The Commissioner now supplied them with the information, which would be found in Table B, page 5, of the report. It was very interesting to him, because for years he had been trying to convince the farmers of Queensland that they had no right to be allied with the squattocracy and the merchants of Queensland, but that they should be allied to the Labour party. The hon. member for Oxley earlier in the evening referred to the £2,000,000 loan. In his (Mr. Collins's) opinion there should be no difficulty whatever in raising the £2,000,000 loan. All one had to do was to look at those income tax figures. It was all very well for the hon. member for Enoggera to talk about taxation being increased; but who had to pay that increased taxation? He found that 2,513 pastoralists had taxable incomes aggregating £3,640,830, on which they paid income tax amounting £452,534.

Mr. VOWLES: That is the State income tax alone.

Mr. COLLINS: It still left them £3,200,000.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the Federal income tax?

Mr. COLLINS: They had to pay a similar amount to the Federal Government. Now he would deal with the farmers, who were allied with the representatives of the pastoralists. He was sorry that, owing to adverse seasons, very few cane farmers were paying income tax. There were 518 of them whose taxable incomes amounted to £167,099. There were near 5,000 cane farmers in Queensland, yet only 518 had taxable incomes last year.

Mr. FLETCHER: That shows that your Government have not looked after them well.

Mr. COLLINS: It showed that they had looked after them well. They were getting a better price for their cane now than at any previous time in the history of Queensland. Coming now to dairy farmers, he was surprised that hon. members on the other side who claimed that they represented the farmers showed when they were discussing the Estimates of the Commissioner of Prices that they did not know their own case. The total number of dairy farmers who paid income tax was 736, their taxable incomes amounting to £114,806. The number of general farmers who paid income tax was 659, with taxable incomes amounting to £95,695. Then there were 124 fruitgrowers with a total taxable income of £26,590. The total number of farmers and fruitgrowers who paid income tax was 2,037. He had been hammering away at that, as "Hansard" would show, since 1911 to try to convince the farmers that they ought to be allied with the Labour party.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Your party has robbed them.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member did not known his own case, so he hoped he would remain quiet while he (Mr. Collins) stated the case on behalf of the farmers. The total number of farmers and fruitgrowers who paid income tax was 2,037, with a total taxable income of £404,190. Compare those figures with the 2,513 pastoralists with a total income of £3,640,830. Fancy a body of intelligent farmers sitting cheek by jowl with representatives of the pastoralists on the other side of the Chamber. The hon. member for Enoggera did a bit of special pleading a few minutes ago on behalf of those wealthy people. He next came to the merchants, who supported hon. members opposite. There were 254 merchants in Queensland with a total taxable income of £322,727—nearly as great an amount as the taxable income of the 2,037 farmers who paid income tax. And yet the Farmers party was allied with the merchants. Those were the people who were continually crying out about income tax and land tax.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is not true.

Mr. COLLINS: When he was asked at Home Hill during the election campaign whether he was in favour of spreading the income tax over three years in the case of farmers, he had the courage to reply—

> "Speaking as a Labour man, I am not so much concerned about the farmer who does pay income tax as about the farmer who does not pay income tax. I doubt if any one of my audience knows how many farmers are paying income tax."

None of them did know, and he had to tell them. That year the number was a little over 4,000. He said that what the Labour party had to concern themselves about was not the farmer who was paying the income tax, but the man who was not in a position to pay income tax. Those were the men for whom the Government had always stood, and they were endeavouring to level up those people. The Commissioner pointed out that the total expenditure in connection with the collection of land and income taxes amounted to only 1.33 per cent. As he pointed out years ago, it would be better for the State if it cost over 2 per cent. for the collection of that tax, because he was satisfied that the State was not getting all it should get from income tax. According to the Commissioner's report, 840 hotelkeepers paid income tax, and their incomes amounted to £400,930. He had not the figures respecting the incomes of the total number of hotelkeepers in the whole of Queensland, but he was prepared to say that they would be found to be double the amount mentioned in the return. In his opinion, it was the duty of the Income Tax Commissioner to examine the accounts of the hotelkeepers, and see if the State could not get an increased revenue from that particular quarter, because he had no sympathy with men who evaded the income tax. From the income tax returns they were able to get to know the position of the State. The total number of income tax payers was 26,326, and their total incomes amounted to £9,735,547. The 2,513 pastoralists who paid income tax had incomes aggregating over one-third of

the total amount on which income tax was paid. Hon. members could not get away from those facts. The statistics of Queensland were not up to date, and he was waiting for these Commissioners to get more up to date and give the public more information. Owing to his reference to this matter from time to time in the House, he had got more information from the Commissioner's report this year. If hon. members cared to turn up "Hansard" for 1911, they would find the position which he had always taken up in regard to this matter. Now, coming to the land tax, he would remind hon. members that the hon. member for Drayton was continually talking about the land tax and the poor farmer paying that land tax. The number of taxpayers who owned land over £5,000 in unimproved value was 844, and the primary tax they paid amounted to £198,509. Fancy the hon. member for Murrumba being concerned about poor farmers having land whose total unimproved value was over £5,000! When the hon. member for Drayton and other hon. members opposite said that the farmers were paying land tax, they were saying something which was not true. With regard to all the talk about getting the £2,000,000 loan which it was proposed to raise in Queensland, his opinion was that the obtaining of that loan was as easy as falling off a log. If the pastoralists he had referred to had any patriotism in them at all, they would say, "There is the £2,000,000; we are only too pleased to give it to you," and the merchants also ought to come along and give a large donation towards the loan. He just wanted in these remarks to draw the attention of the public first to the position of the farmers, secondly to the position of the squatters, and thirdly to the position of the bulk of the people who did not pay income tax and who did not receive sufficient income to enable them to pay that tax.

Mr. BRAND: Do the returns of the State stations show that the pastoralists are doing well?

Mr. COLLINS: He was not dealing with that question. Could the hon. member tell him now much wealth was produced in Queensland last year? The answer was over £40,000,000 worth. The hon. member for Bulimba and other members on that side of the House seemed to be concerned about the pastoralist—"the poor pastoralist"! What they should be concerned about was the poor farmer who did not pay the tax, and the poor labourer who could not pay the income tax. Those were the people the Government were concerned about, and they were trying, step by step, to level up the conditions of those persons. The hon. member for Drayton ought to know that the farmers of Queensland paid very little in land tax. The payers of land tax were the holders of large unimproved values, especially lands over £5,000 in value, and taxation of those people was not going to bring about the ruination of the country. Unless there was more land put under cultivation, unless large owners of land were made by taxation to put their land under cultivation, or part with it to those who would cultivate the land, the State could not progress.

Mr. BRAND: That is the very point. Why don't you do it?

Mr. COLLINS: The Government had been endeavouring to do it. But members opposite had been trying to deceive the farmers by telling them that the farmers paid the land tax. He had been endeavouring all his life to show the people that the farmers did not pay the land tax, but that that tax was paid by land speculators. The bulk of the income tax was paid by people with very large incomes, and not by the working population at all. When the hon. member for Enoggera got up and said that the taxation had increased by so much per head of the population, it was not true at all. The fact of the matter was that the Government placed the taxation on the shoulders of those best able to bear it. Look what they were doing in Great Britain. In Great Britain they were raising by means of income tax £354,000,000. They would find that in the "Daily Mail Year Book." In Great Britain they were facing the situation and were standing up to it properly. It was more than likely that that was what they would have to do in Queensland, and in Australia as well. They were determined that they were going to carry on this country, and the people who had got the wealth would have to pay. Great Britain would be the first country in the world, owing to the fact that she was facing the situation so well.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Free of the Labour party.

Mr. COLLINS: They had a Tory Government in Great Britain. It looked as if some Tory Governments were getting as advanced as some Labour Governments. Income taxation was a form of taxing which could be defended at all times, because it was placing a tax on the wealthy of the country. They knew where that wealth came from. The rich people got their wealth through exploiting the labourers, and that was why he said that the wealthy should be made to pay up and look cheerful. There ought to be no trouble at all in floating the £2,000,000 loan if there was any patriotism at all in Queensland.

Mr. BRAND: You don't make much out of your State enterprises, anyhow.

Mr. COLLINS: He intended to keep within the Standing Orders by confining his speech to the vote before the Committee, and he would discuss the State enterprises on another vote.

The TREASURER: The leader of the Opposition referred to the amalgamation of the taxing machinery of the State and Commonwealth. At the last Premiers' Conference it was decided that the States and Commonwealth should co-operate in the establishment of a board which would make inquiries into the whole business. Every person with common sense recognised the absurdity of having a dual system of income tax and land tax collection. In the same way, it was absurd to have two electoral rolls. But all these matters were not so simple of solution as one would imagine. The Labour party had been in office about five years. The party opposite had eleven years in office, after the inauguration of the Commonwealth, to achieve all these reforms but did not do it. The present Queensland Government had done something tangible. The Commission which was now sitting in regard to taxation was appointed at the suggestion of Queensland, and was operating on suggestions offered by himself (Mr. Fihelly). He was not saying that to please

himself, or to please anyone else, but it was an indication that they were in earnest and meant business. Anyone who read the reports of the Interstate Commission would see what was done.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Has not Western Australia already secured it?

The TREASURER: According to the reports in the Press it looked as if it was done in Western Australia. There were factors which had operated against those reforms. There was what he might call "vested interests" where public servants were concerned. That was, perhaps, one of the greatest impediments. The Commonwealth man would think that he was more competent to conduct the business than the State man.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Will not Western Australia save two-thirds of the cost by the Commonwealth undertaking the collections.

The TREASURER: No; Mr. Watt gave figures to the conference in which he stated he could collect the tax for one-third of the cost, then for one-fifth of the cost, and afterwards he gave no figures at all. Western Australia might have got the assurance from the Commonwealth that, no matter what it cost, the Commonwealth would not charge more than one-third what it would cost Western Australia.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Look what it would save Queensland if we had the same arrangements!

The TREASURER: The Queensland Government was not a parochial Government and did not look to the borders North and South and along the coast to the East. If they could simplify matters for the benefit of the taxpayer they would do it. The Government wanted to accomplish those reforms, if they could do it. He thought they should have the one roll. They could also have one Statistician's Department. He did not see why any duplication was required there. He was in favour of a Greater Brisbane for the same reason. The Government were proceeding with the different reforms, and extended a generous welcome to any ideas in that direction.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Bowen talked about the great profits the merchants and graziers were making. If the graziers were making such great profits, the hon. member should have stated what capital was invested, and then they would see what percentage the profits represented. The hon. member thought that a man's turnover in Queen street was his profit, and that everything that was sold in a draper's shop was profit. It was an object lesson to the House to see what they were losing on the State Enterprises. Hon. members opposite said that private persons made great profits out of pastoral properties; yet the State, after spending £1,309,470 in State stations, only made a profit of 2 per cent. They got that small profit, although they did not have to pay land or income tax or rates. If a private person had invested that amount, he would have had to pay larger sums in income tax than the profits received under State management. If there were such profits to be made, how was it the State could not make them out of its big properties carried on within the largest rainfall.

[*Hon. J. A. Fihelly.*

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not pursue that question any further. I have allowed him to go a certain distance in order to connect his argument.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was only discussing the State stations so far as the income tax was concerned, and was showing how much the State lost. The State paid no taxes at all, whereas the farmers had to pay sixteen or seventeen different taxes. Out of all those taxes, he contended that the income tax was the fairest, and if he had his way he would have that tax only. The taxes of the State and Federal Government in Australia during the last year [9.30 p.m.] had amounted to as high as 10s. 3d. in the £1 of income, and he thought it was about time that they called a halt in that regard.

The TREASURER: Where did you get those figures.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He got them from the man who paid them. He would give the hon. gentleman another startler. Some of the graziers in Queensland last year paid as much as 83 per cent. on their incomes, and then the member for Bowen talked about the great profits that the graziers had been making. When people were taxed to the extent of 83 per cent. on their income, it was time for them to look for some way of getting out of the country. Then some of the graziers had three bad years, and the war-time profits tax was levied on the whole of their income during that period. It was 50 per cent. in 1915, 75 per cent. in 1916, and nearly the whole for the next year. When one tax was levied up to 50 per cent. and 75 per cent. on the whole of a man's income and then in addition he had to pay the ordinary State and Federal taxes on his whole income, it meant that he would have practically nothing left. That was what was breaking down our industries and keeping people from coming to Queensland to invest their money—that was the policy of this wasteful Government, who were simply living on the people. He could tell the hon. member for Bowen that a man who had bought 1,000 acres of land on the Downs at £4 per acre had to pay a land tax of £84 a year. In the time of the Denham Government a lot of men came here from the other States with capital; they bought up a certain amount of land, intending to divide it amongst their sons. The present Government came along and taxed that land to such an extent that many of the boys—boys who should have been good settlers—would not take it up, and had gone into the cities, or back to their own States. Hon. gentlemen talked about forcing land into cultivation. They could force land out of cultivation, but not into cultivation.

Mr. HARTLEY: Nonsense!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They had forced thousands of acres out of cultivation, but they had never forced one acre into cultivation. Immediately they made the expenses of cultivation more than the amount the people were getting out of the land, they forced it out of cultivation, and if hon. gentlemen wanted an example let them go to the Downs and see the thousands of acres that had not been cultivated, in spite of the high price of wheat. The Downs had been doubly taxed in comparison with other

portions of the State, simply because the shire councils had kept their taxes higher and the Commissioner had to tax them in accordance with the tax returned by the shire council. He had seen good river flats, valued at £1 an acre in the Central districts—(Government dissent)—and similar lands in the Darling Downs was taxed at £10 and £12 an acre.

Mr. HARTLEY: You would not get an acre of land in the Central district for £1.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He knew it could be got for 10s. an acre. He considered that the increase in public servants and State enterprises was becoming a danger to the State, and the hon. gentleman knew it perfectly well. They would very soon be able to control the State. The hon. member for Bowen knew that when they got the State ironworks at Bowen he would simply be in the hands of the Government servants. What income tax have the State butchers' shops paid? It cost them over 100 per cent. on their turnover to run them, and they made 4 per cent. profit. What would Government members think of the business man who charged 100 per cent. on his turnover, and only made 4 per cent. profit? The hon. member for Bowen had said that they had only taxed the rich merchants.

Mr. COLLINS: I did not say the merchants alone; I told you a number of the people whom we taxed.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member was glorying in the fact that they were taxing the merchants out of existence, while at the same time he knew it was an impossibility. He knew that they were not taxing them at all, because the merchants passed it on to the consumer, and it was the working man who was carrying the burden of the tax.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is a new statement from you.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Minister ought to know that perfectly well. How was a merchant going to pay his taxes if he did not put them on to the goods he sold? Could they wonder at the cost of living going up, and that a workman with double the wages now was worse off than before? Could they wonder that a workman with £200 to £300 in the bank found that his money had only half the purchasing value it used to have, when thousands of pounds income tax which the merchant had to pay was put on to the man who bought the goods. Why not say right out that the Government was taxing the working man and not the merchant?

Mr. EDWARDS (*Yanango*): He was one of those who held that income tax should be imposed on the farmers on a three-years' basis.

The TREASURER: We told you in the Financial Statement that we were going to do that.

Mr. EDWARDS: He congratulated the Government on that. The Government had stolen the Country party's platform.

The TREASURER: Do you want it back?

Mr. EDWARDS: They did not object at all, and they would give the Government every assistance to bring that about. He was very much struck with the statement of the hon. member for Bowen with reference to land under cultivation, but the hon. member was absolutely mistaken in his idea as to why the farmers did not pay income tax. In all farming districts freights had been increased, and the trains came in in many instances three or four hours late. There were farmers in some districts 30 or 40 miles away from a railway. The money which should have been spent in building a railway to those districts had been used in some other direction. Hon. members opposite then had the audacity to say that they were helping to bring the land under cultivation.

The TREASURER: This is not the Agricultural Department vote.

Mr. EDWARDS: He was speaking about the income tax, and the way in which the farmers could be helped, so as to enable them to pay income tax. Those were some of the reasons why the land was not going into cultivation to-day. The way to deal with big men in the North in reference to income tax was to bring the land under cultivation. The Government had meddled with the business of the pastoralists, and had absolutely failed. The farmer, in addition to income tax, had to pay increased rates and freights on machinery, and also for an increased number of inspectors. The large sum of money which the hon. member for Bowen said the farmers were making did not find its way back to them, and many of them could not pay income tax. The Government should assist the Country party in its efforts towards co-operation, which was the only way in which they would enable the farmer to pay income tax. He believed that the income tax was the fairest tax which they could impose on the man on the land; but, to put a land tax on a small holding, was unjust and unfair. When the Government came forward with a scheme of true co-operation in regard to land settlement, he would support them. The Country party were not with the merchant in making a lot of money out of the people; they were desirous of settling them on the land. A great deal had been said by hon. members opposite about the members of the Country party not knowing anything about the business they were here for. He and other hon. members of the Country party had been through the mill, and very often they had been unable to get into such a position as would enable them to pay income tax, and there were thousands more in the same category. He appealed to the Government to give the man on the land a chance, and not allow so many burdens to be passed on to him, one of which was the saddling of a lot of inspectors upon him. If they helped instead of harassing them in the way he had indicated, the farmers would pay more income tax than they had done.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE wanted to deal briefly with the statement the Treasurer had made regarding the unification of income tax. He was hoping—seeing that the Treasurer had the privilege of initiating this principle—that Queensland would have been the first to share in those advantages. Apart from the saving of trouble to the income tax payers, or those who filled in income tax forms, considerable economy could be effected in the unification of income tax payments.

The TREASURER: You know what they have done over there. They have not arrived at a uniform form: they have merely dispensed with the staff.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: What they had arrived at, as far as he understood, was this, and it was being effected now—the Commonwealth had undertaken to collect all West Australian income tax for one-third of the cost which the West Australian Government incurred at the present moment.

The TREASURER: They won't be able to do it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It did not matter.

The TREASURER: It is the same old taxpayer.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: But they were certainly effecting considerable economy. If they had effected an arrangement like that here, they would have been saving something like £30,000 a year. That might be nothing when they talked millions, but it was something to him.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth are not game to make an offer like that to us.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He wanted to deal with the remark made by the hon. member for Bowen; that was, that there was a great number of men who were evading income tax payments in Queensland to-day. He agreed that there was a large number who were evading income tax, and a considerable number were making a public boast of it. The point was as to how they were going to catch these gentlemen. At a time when revenue was very scarce, and they wanted to get all that was possible, they had to search round and find ways and means of bringing these gentlemen to book. He could tell the hon. member they were not all in the wealthy ranks. There was a large number of people who supported hon. gentlemen opposite who would not pay income tax, and who should pay it. They had to bring them all to book—it did not matter in what category they might be. How was it going to be done? On a previous vote they had had a discussion on electoral reform, and there was a great deal of diversity of opinion as to how to cleanse the rolls. He was going to make a proposal which would have the double objective—the cleansing of the rolls and forcing people to pay income tax who claimed the suffrage in connection with the elections. He could see no reason why every adult in Queensland—male and female—should not be compelled to render an income tax statement to the Income Tax Commissioner, no matter what their income might be.

The TREASURER: That is a reform!

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It was a reform, and it was a wonder the hon. gentleman had not thought of it. He was going to submit it for consideration. The result would be that, in the first place, the Income Tax Commissioner would have before him the financial condition of every adult in Queensland. Every person who claimed to be entitled to a vote to control Queensland should have no objection to rendering to the Income Tax Commissioner some statement of his or her financial position. The next step would be that the Commissioner would issue a receipt for that form having been lodged with him. That receipt should be that person's qualification for voting. Any man or woman who went into a polling-booth should produce that receipt to show that he or she had rendered a statement of income in Queensland.

The TREASURER: It would be a good scheme if the Commonwealth did that work.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Let them take it step by step; he was not going to involve it by raising that issue. They knew perfectly well there were hundreds of people who would not pay income tax in Queensland who ought to, and they had to bring them to book. If they were going to evade their responsibilities in that direction he would deprive them of their vote. It would not entail any great burden. It would give the Income Tax Commissioner such an insight into the private affairs of individuals as would be an eye-opener to the majority of the people in the State.

The TREASURER: Would it not be simpler to publish all incomes?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That might be the hon. gentleman's way of doing it. The hon. gentleman would be one of the last to wish to publish his income.

The TREASURER: It is published in the reports.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The hon. gentleman surely did not think they were going to imagine that was the limit of his income. The scheme he had outlined was thoroughly well worth attention, because it would achieve two things—help to purify the rolls and bring under the direct notice of the Income Tax Commissioner a large section of the community who at present paid no income tax whatever.

He was very pleased to note that the income from the State loan which was being issued shortly was not going to be taken into consideration when arriving at the basis of income tax which the taxpayer was called upon to pay on the residue of his income. That method—or confidence trick, as one might call it—was practised with regard to the Commonwealth loan, with the result that confidence was again disturbed, and the courts had to be applied to and redress obtained to the detriment of Queensland's good name.

The TREASURER: A very fair thing.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Yet the Treasurer had not the pluck to put it into application with reference to the loan before the people to-day.

The TREASURER: It has nothing to do with force, or confidence, or equity. It is merely a matter that we cannot allow our securities to be worse on the market than the others.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The Treasurer was going to argue that what was good enough for the Commonwealth Loan subscribers was not good enough for his. That might be the hon. gentleman's way of viewing it; but, in matters of finance, they wanted to look at it from a broader perspective and not try tricks on the Commonwealth they were not prepared to exercise in their own State.

The TREASURER: It is not a trick.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Of course, it was. The courts had ruled in that way.

The TREASURER: It relieves the Queensland taxpayer, as the Commonwealth taxpayer was by the High Court decision.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It was all very well to put it in that way. But why put the taxpayer in the position of having to go to the court to seek relief and redress from his operations?

The TREASURER: Because it was a fair thing.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Why did he not apply it to Queensland?

The TREASURER: It was. We collected that £6,000.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He meant in connection with the hon. gentleman's own loan. He knew it was an objectionable thing, and, therefore, he had cut it out.

The TREASURER: Why should we have the two loans put on a false basis?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: On a false basis, admittedly. It was the falsity of the basis and its introduction into the Commonwealth which had placed us in the invidious position of the taxpayer having to go to the High Court and seek protection against the hon. gentleman's operations. These little tricks were what they were trying to call attention to, because they were undermining confidence.

The TREASURER: It will be a bad day for Australia when we hand it over to any bunch of lawyers in the court.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This decision was given by their own High Court of Australia. This was the court which the hon. gentleman and his party wanted to be the last word in translating legislation.

The TREASURER: So it should be.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Very well. Yet the hon. gentleman was saying how terrible it would be to hand their interests over to them. His statements were a mass of contradictions. The hon. gentlemen had transgressed as regarded the Commonwealth loan, by introducing an element which was dangerous and which was harmful. They had pointed it out at the time the Income Tax Bill was before that House; but the hon. gentlemen, with their superior air of knowledge, knew everything, and were led into the undignified position of the taxpayer having to go to the High Court to seek redress. He had got it, and they were glad to notice that the hon. gentleman had learnt wisdom at the eleventh hour and removed that objectionable clause from the loan regulations which were before Queensland at the present time.

He was sorry the hon. member for Bowen had thought fit to indulge in a tirade upon the pastoralists, who were the financial backbone of the State at the present moment; because the figures before them clearly showed that, if the pastoral industry of Queensland had passed en bloc into the hands of the hon. gentlemen opposite, they would have lost one of the most useful channels of taxation the State had. At a later stage they hoped to refer to mismanagement of State Enterprises in the matter of State stations; in view of which the hon. member for Bowen should hold out the hand of thankfulness and congratulation to the pastoralist in that he was a large section of pioneers, a large section of successful men, who created income which permitted of these gentlemen obtaining the largest proportion of their income tax revenue from it.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member for Drayton seemed to think he was quoting something that was not correct in reference to his remarks about the land tax. No matter how anxious the Committee might be to get on with business, he also was anxious that the farmers of Queensland should know who was paying the land tax. On page 2 of the report of the Commissioner for Land Tax would be found these words—

> "Taxation paid by farmers owning land valued at less than £1,281 and under who paid tax numbered 11,338, the amount of tax charged being £20,993, equal to 4.6 per cent. of the total tax charged on all lands."

The hon. member for Drayton spoke about the farmers on the Downs with £4,000. He took it that everyone knew that you did not pay land tax except on the unimproved value of land, and, when he looked at the tables, he found that there were only 534 who owned land of the unimproved value of £2,000 to £2,499; and that there were only 295 who owned land with an unimproved value of £4,000 to £4,999. What was the use of hon. members trying to deceive the public? The hon. member's argument about the farmer paying the land tax would not bear examination, and he would like to hear some hon. members on the opposite side get up and refute the statements he had made, and take the same authority that he was taking—that was the report of the Commissioner for Land and Income Tax.

Question put and passed.

MARINE.

The TREASURER moved—That £79,630 be granted for "Marine." It would be seen that the total increase was, approximately, £7,000, which was due to the increased cost of material, buoys, beacons, stores, etc., and increased wages to the men. Hon. members would notice that here and there a boat would be laid up, but they could be assured that a good service would be continued and efficiency would be the watchword as in the past.

Mr. GREEN: The portmasters and officials were doing good work and were carrying out efficiently the work of the Marine Department, but he would like to draw the Government's attention to the position in North Queensland from now till April or May, and he trusted they would give effect to the suggestion to have stationed in one of the Northern ports, at a suitable centre such as Townsville, a boat that would be sufficiently powerful to go out and safeguard, if necessary, the lives of those travelling at sea.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth should have destroyers stationed at different ports, but the matter is receiving consideration.

Mr. GREEN: From Mackay upwards, they had the Barrier Reef, and were subject to cyclones, and it should certainly be the policy of the Government to safeguard human life. There might be disasters calling for assistance and the Government should have a launch available which was powerful enough to render such assistance. Some of the Government boats would be lying idle, and they might be stationed at suitable centres.

The TREASURER: The boats we have are not suitable for the work. The ideal boat would be a destroyer, and the Commonwealth ought to have one stationed at Thursday Island or Cairns, and boats at other ports.

Mr. GREEN: Would the hon. gentleman approach the Commonwealth Government?

The TREASURER: We have done that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: He would like to know what the Government had done in regard to the Harbour Board Bill. Did the Government intend to bring about State control of all harbours?

The TREASURER: We won't proceed with anything of that nature during the session.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Have you abandoned the idea?

The TREASURER: That was a question that might be asked at question time.

Question put and passed.

MARINE BOARD.

The TREASURER moved—That £4,515 be granted for "Marine Board." The major portion of that amount was for salaries. The increase was not much, and would have been a trifle greater than it was, but for the fact that gratuities were paid last year, and, of course, would not be payable this year.

Mr. PETERSON asked what was the intention of the Government in regard to handing over the pilot service to the Commonwealth.

The TREASURER: It is covered by the Navigation Act, and the Commonwealth will take the service over automatically.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING OFFICE.

The TREASURER moved—That £167,890 be granted for "Printing Office." Here, again, the increase was largely in the wages bill. Of course, the Government had no control in that matter, as the men went to the Arbitration Court and the court did the fair thing. The Government Printer had an efficient staff, a good office, and his machinery was fairly modern. The Government were sorry they could not give him more machinery, but they had been up against a tough proposition during the last couple of years, owing to increased wages and the enormous increase in the price of paper.

Mr. VOWLES: The fact that wages at the Government Printing Office had gone up from £76,000 to £98,000 showed the effect which the increases in wages generally must be having on business.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the reason for the shrinkage in the returns from the "Government Gazette" from £1,770 in 1915-16 to £53 4s. 11d.

The TREASURER: They have not the same sale for the "Gazette" as for other publications.

Question put and passed.

STORES.

The TREASURER moved—That £7,994 be granted for "Stores." Here, again, they found a tabulation of the salaries granted under the awards, but there had been a decrease in the cost of printing, postages, telegrams, and incidentals. He understood that a few reforms were in progress, and, no doubt, in time they would be working along the efficient lines where the Government would have one Stores Department for the whole of the service. In the meantime the branch was working satisfactorily.

HON. W. H. BARNES asked if the present policy of the Stores Department was going to be continued this year. He was not suggesting that the Government Storekeeper was going outside his instructions. His experience was that he was one of the most careful and thorough men he had ever met, and he was sure he would carry out his instructions to the very letter. The policy he referred to was in making purchases. Was he to be restricted in future as at present, to Government institutions, so that he could not do justice to his department or to himself, or was he to be allowed to go outside, if necessary, to find the best market? He thought he should have a free hand.

The TREASURER: This was an important question. It would be rather illogical, say, for the Government to permit any department, including the Storekeeper, to insure outside the State office, unless the Commissioner could not do the business at the prices of his competitors, allowing for a little margin for better treatment that the Government employees got, and should get—because the Government was a model employer. If State institutions could not give service or material—manufactured articles, for instance—about the same as private enterprise they should cease to exist. The Government Storekeeper had never complained to him.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: What are his instructions?

The TREASURER: His instructions naturally were to deal with State institutions. What a ridiculous suggestion! What fools they would be if they ran State institutions and then allowed their own wants to be satisfied from outside! Naturally, when the Government Storekeeper wanted produce, he dealt with the State Agency, and if he did not get the same value as he could get from outside it was his duty to let the Minister know at once.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: How can he know if he is not permitted to get quotations elsewhere?

The TREASURER: They would have occasional quotations obtained elsewhere. In regard to one enterprise conducted by a new man, some contract was given outside without contemplation—he failed to obtain a quotation from the Government department dealing in that particular line—but he thought the Committee would see how ridiculous it would be if they ran enterprises and then refused their own stuff.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member evidently did not realise the position. If the Storekeeper were not allowed to get quotations outside, how could he form an idea as to whether the prices he paid to any agency were giving him a fair deal? The policy should be to obtain prices from other firms and see which was bedrock. Would the Treasurer not admit that when they practically prevented competition they were opening the door to very serious abuses and placing the Storekeeper and the Government at a disadvantage?

The TREASURER: I will inquire into that.

Question put and passed.

WATER SUPPLY.

The TREASURER moved—That £36,664 be granted for "Water Supply." There was an increase in that vote also in salaries, and there was a fairly substantial increase in contingencies. Hon. members would get some idea of the directions in which increased expenditure was necessary when he mentioned that the vote for instruments and maintenance of gauging stations, etc., was now £3,100. There was an item of £45,000 on the Loan Estimates for irrigation. He might be permitted to say in connection with that vote that he thought hon. members would find Mr. Crowley's reports very interesting, but, of course, they could not be discussed at the present juncture.

Mr. FRY: Did the Government propose to act upon the reports submitted by Mr. Crowley on the various catchment areas?

The TREASURER: If the Government had about £30,000,000 to spend, they might.

Mr. FRY: The reports, judging by the statements published in the Press, appeared to be merely casual observations. Hydraulic engineers who had been working under Australian conditions had come to the conclusion that Mr. Crowley's recommendations were purely superficial and that before the Government acted upon them they should obtain some other opinion.

The TREASURER: The report of the Hydraulic Engineer will be printed before the session closes.

Mr. FRY: That would be all right. Water conservation was going to be a very big thing in Queensland, because electricity was going to play a very big part in the development of the country. There were other catchment areas and sources of electric power besides running streams. There were places along the Queensland coast where water could be conserved, and, after the water had been used for the generation of electric power, it could be used for irrigation purposes. There was a greater scheme than had yet been reported upon, and that was why he asked the Government not to act upon Mr. Crowley's reports until they had obtained some more definite information.

Mr. CATTERMULL (*Musgrave*): He desired to congratulate the Government upon starting irrigation works in Queensland.

The TREASURER: The proper place to discuss irrigation is on the vote on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. CATTERMULL: They might not have an opportunity of discussing the question on that vote, so he would like to be allowed the opportunity to say a few words on the present vote.

The CHAIRMAN: The question of irrigation involves the expenditure of loan money, and, therefore, I cannot allow a discussion of it upon this vote.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND STOCK.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) moved—That £37,385 be granted for the "Chief Office, Department of Agriculture and Stock." The vote showed an increase of £8,794 on the vote for last year. Increases in salary were responsible for £3,914, and there were eleven additional officers appointed. All officers in receipt of less than £600 received increases under the General and Professional Officers' Association awards. The additions to the staff were—one entomologist, one assistant instructor in fruit culture, three assistant instructors in agriculture, one instructor in cheese making, and six extra clerks.

Mr. VOWLES: This was one of the most important departments in the State, as it was to agriculture and stock that Queensland must look in the future if she was to make up the leeway she had made during the last few years. It was to increased production that they must look for a solution of their financial problems, and, therefore, it was necessary for the Government to do everything in their power to foster the agricultural and pastoral industries. In the past the department had been the Cinderella of the State departments. Why he had never been able to learn. From time to time Ministers complained that members did not assist them with useful suggestions, and he would suggest that possibly the reason for the lack of development in the past was due to the small amount of money that was placed at the disposal of the department which limited the amount of experimental work that the department was able to undertake.

The PREMIER: Are you speaking of Conservative administrations?

Mr. VOWLES: He was speaking of both the present Administration and previous Administrations. It was only during the last elections that the present Government suddenly discovered that they were the friends of the farmers, but the discovery was only makebelieve on their part. He had never seen one instance in which they had done anything to assist the farmers.

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

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the operation of Standing Order 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.

MINING ACTS AMENDMENT BILL, No. 2.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): I beg to move that the Bill be now read a second time. I pointed out at an earlier stage of the Bill that it contains only two clauses, one of which is an amendment of section 11 of the Consolidated Acts, and makes provision for the election of check inspectors by the miners themselves. It also makes provision for the removal of those inspectors by a vote of the miners. It is really a necessary amendment to enable the idea of the original Act to be carried out, and is required in order to provide the method of election. The second clause deals with the question of perpetual leases. Section 23 of the Miners' Homestead Leases Act was repealed, and a new section inserted in the amending Act, but by some oversight the proviso stating that the annual rent of a perpetual lease should be 5s. was omitted. This proviso we now propose to insert.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

Clause 1 put and passed.

On clause 2—"*Amendment of s. 5 of 10 Geo. V. No. 27*"—

Mr. VOWLES asked how it was proposed to remove an inspector who was elected under the provisions of the Bill?

The HOME SECRETARY: The miners may remove him by a vote by ballot. These check inspectors are to inspect dangerous places in a mine.

Clause put and passed.

On clause 3—"*Amendment of s. 26 of 10 Geo. V. No. 27*"—

MR. CORSER: He should like to know if this provision was to be retrospective.

The HOME SECRETARY: No; there are some who would not pay the 5s.

Mr. CORSER: He should just like to say that there were many Acts concerning the primary producers which needed amending, and he should like to know why the Government did not amend those Acts.

Clause put and passed.

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

The third reading of the Bill was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at twenty-four minutes to 11 o'clock p.m.