

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 11 AUGUST 1921

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 11 AUGUST, 1921.

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

PAPERS.

The following papers were laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Regulation, dated 11th March, 1921, under the Fruit Cases Act of 1912.

Regulation, dated 17th June, 1921, under the Diseases in Plants Act of 1916.

Regulation, dated 10th June, 1921, under the Co-operative Agricultural Production and Advances to Farmers Acts, 1914-1919.

Regulation, dated 27th January, 1921, under the Wheat Pool Act of 1920.

Regulations, dated 15th April, 1921, under the Dairy Produce Act of 1920.

First report on the creation, inscription, and issue of Government inscribed stock for the year 1920-1921.

Balance-sheet of the Public Curator for the year 1920.

Regulations, dated 2nd June and 29th July, 1921, under the Public Curator Act of 1915.

Return pursuant to an Order made on the 17th November, 1920, by the Legislative Assembly, on the motion of the honourable member for East Toowoomba, regarding the results of the voting of the various polling-booths throughout the State in the recent general election.

Regulations, dated 29th July, 1921, under the Health Acts, 1900 to 1917, being the Poisons Regulations of 1921.

QUESTIONS.**AUDITOR-GENERAL'S REPORT.**

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked the Premier, without notice—

“Has the Auditor-General's report been received by the Government, and, if so, when will it be available to the House?”

The PREMIER replied—

“The hon. member should know by this time, as the information has been frequently given, that the Auditor-General's report does not come to the Premier, but comes to you, Sir, as Speaker of the House.”

REFUSAL TO ANSWER QUESTIONS UNTIL WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION DISPOSED OF.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I desire to ask the Home Secretary question No. 1 standing in my name.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): In view of the fact that notice has been given of a want of confidence motion, it is not the intention of the Government to answer questions until that motion is disposed of.

DEATH OF HON. T. J. RYAN.**MOTION OF CONDOLENCE.**

The PREMIER, in moving, by leave, without notice—

“That this House enters on its journals its admiration of the splendid gifts of the late Honourable T. J. Ryan, and

its appreciation of his devoted service to Queensland, and requests Mr. Speaker to convey to Mrs. Ryan an expression of its deep sympathy with her and her family in their great affliction"—

said: It is my melancholy duty to move such a resolution, and it is made more melancholy because of the intimate personal friendship which I feel nearly every man in this Chamber had towards the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, and made a very sad duty, too, because he had only reached middle life, when he was cut off in so sudden and tragic a manner. Mr. Ryan was personally known to most of the members of this House, and, I feel, favourably known to all of us. Although he fought strenuously in the interests of his party and the cause which he espoused, he had so great a charm of character and personality, that I think he was held in high esteem, respect, and affection by all those who knew him personally. Mr. Ryan figured very largely in the public life of Australia in the last few years, and was one of our most notable and, I think, one of the greatest citizens in Queensland of the present generation. He was a man who won his way to a very high place in the official life of the community by dint of his own perseverance, his own strong character, his native and his acquired ability. The community can ill afford to lose such a valued citizen as he. He was cut off, one might say, half way through his life's work, which makes his death all the more tragic from the point of view of the community. Under normal circumstances, but for this accident, one might say, which overtook him, he might have continued for another thirty years, probably serving the interests of the Commonwealth and the community in various spheres of activity. (Hear, hear!) We have the consolation, at any rate, of knowing that Mr. Ryan's life will serve as something to be emulated by future generations in Australia. He set himself high ideals. He cast his plane of conduct very high, consequently he was one of those public men of whom the whole community could be proud. His late colleagues, and I think the whole community, respect his memory; the whole nation mourns his loss. At the same time we all feel the greatest possible sympathy for his widow. (Hear, hear!) Mrs. Ryan also is well known to us, and we know that the lives of the late Mr. Ryan and his wife were cast upon a singularly happy plane. The late T. J. Ryan and his wife were great chums. They shared each other's lives and each other's life's work. I think that she was a perfect example of helpmeet to a public man. (Hear, hear!) Whatever we, his late associates, may feel regarding the loss of the late Mr. T. J. Ryan, the loss to her must be absolutely irreparable. Therefore, I think that we can feel the utmost sympathy for her in her great grief. There is nothing more that I can say on this subject. I think I have expressed the sentiments of all the members of this House towards the late Mr. T. J. Ryan. I submit the resolution feeling that hon. members desire this opportunity of recording their feelings in the matter, and their sympathy with the dependants of our late Premier.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): In supporting the motion so ably and sympathetically moved by the Premier, I feel that I am voicing the sentiments of the whole of the Opposition

when I say that we deeply regret the untimely demise of the late Hon. T. J. Ryan. He was a man many of us were actively associated with in this Parliament, and although we agreed to disagree on matters of public policy, and although we were strongly opposed to him in politics, yet we recognised in him a man who as a Queenslander had attained high distinction. His loss is, no doubt, a very great loss to the party he belonged to, and it is a loss which makes his place a very hard one to fill. To Mrs. Ryan and her children we offer our deepest sympathy in the loss of a good husband and a good father. The remarks made by the Premier in reference to the assistance given by Mrs. Ryan to her husband appeal to me very much. Those of us who are engaged in public life recognise the great bond that always existed between Mr. Ryan and his wife. We know how she always assisted him in this Chamber, both as regard public matters and in social functions. Mr. Ryan not only attained high distinction as a politician, but as a jurist he attained great distinction, too. I feel sure that, had he lived, he would have risen to the highest rung of the ladder, and attained the highest possible distinction as a jurist. On behalf of the Opposition, I have much pleasure in supporting the motion that has been moved by the Premier.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I also desire to endorse the motion and the sentiments expressed so ably in the Chamber by the Premier. Members on this side of the Chamber who knew Mr. Ryan and fought him in this Chamber always recognised the charming personality of the man. I suppose there was never a Premier of Queensland who showed such courtesy and kindness to members opposed to him as the late Mr. Ryan did. It was a distinguishing trait of his character. He knew no favourites in this Chamber when public matters were concerned and when members from either side of the House approached him in regard to public business. I agree with the Premier that his death was almost tragic, as he was cut off when his life's work was only half way through. It is very hard for us to realise that the big, burly man we knew for so many years, a man who always had a cheerful word and a cheerful smile for all, has gone, and that we shall never see him any more. However, he has been removed from us, and I feel quite satisfied in my own mind that he has gone to a higher and a better life. His wife was a devoted helpmeet, and I quite agree with the Premier when he stated what an advantage that is to a public man. She upheld her husband in all his work, not only in Queensland, but throughout the whole of Australia. (Hear, hear!) I am sure that the hearts of everyone in this Chamber will go out in deepest sympathy to Mrs. Ryan and family in their great loss and sad bereavement.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): On behalf of the citizens represented by the Northern Country party I would like to express my keen sympathy with the motion which has been so touchingly moved by the Premier this afternoon. One cannot but feel the deepest regret at the loss of such a noble son of Australia as the late Mr. Ryan. He was an Australian with a great personality and great ability. Unfortunately, I did not have the pleasure of meeting him in the political

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sense, but I met him unofficially in connection with other matters, and I was certainly struck with his kindly disposition and with the personality which he manifested on that occasion. I would like to express my keen sense of regret at the loss that Australia has sustained through the death of such a statesman at so early a stage of his life. I would like also to express, on behalf of the Northern Country party, our sincere sympathy with Mrs. Ryan and her children. Of all the tributes that have been paid to the late statesman, the one that appealed to me most was the tribute concerning his home life. It matters not what his politics may have been—it matters not whether we disagreed with him in that sense or not—we must recognise that a man who sets a standard in home life is setting a standard for the whole community, and a standard which will live and exert an influence in the years to come far and away above any influence that might have been exercised in the political sphere. Whilst we have such statesmen setting an example of home life to the rest of the community, we need not fear for the future of this Commonwealth which we all love and admire. I would also like to express our appreciation of the touching manner in which the Premier has moved the resolution this afternoon.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HONOURABLE MEMBERS rose in their places to signify their assent to the motion.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

The PREMIER, in moving—

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

said: I do not know that it is necessary to justify this resolution. It is the time-honoured custom to suspend the Standing Orders in order to pass a Supply Bill through all its stages in one day. We cannot pursue the other course of letting the Bill go through its normal stages, as Supply is wanted immediately. Parliament last year, it is true, granted a month's Supply on account of the year 1921-1922. That carried us to the end of last month, and before the next fortnightly pay is due additional Supply is required.

[4 p.m.]

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): My object in calling “Not formal” to this motion was not to block Supply, because we know that whatever happens in this House the services of the public must be carried on, but rather to utter a protest against the necessity for this motion at all—a necessity caused by the delay in calling Parliament together until the eleventh hour when the cash box is empty, and then not for the purpose of discussing business, but in order to get more money to go on with. The Premier says that this is a time-honoured custom. Then it is time we altered that custom, for Parliament should go through the procedure established by the Standing Orders.

Question put and passed.

[*Mr. Green.*]

SUPPLY.

CONSTITUTION OF COMMITTEE—VOTE ON ACCOUNT FOR £2,650,000.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): Mr. Speaker,—I beg to move—

“That you do now leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Supply to be granted to His Majesty.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Before you leave the chair, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out to hon. members that this is the time when the Opposition have an opportunity of ventilating grievances, and before any large sum of money is voted I have one very serious grievance to bring before the House—that is the fact that during last session of Parliament there was a determined and an effective stonewall on the part of Government members to prevent the Opposition from criticising the Government, more particularly in respect to their management of State enterprises.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Untrue.

Mr. VOWLES: The public should realise that on our State enterprises we are losing money hand-over-fist, and that scarcely one of them can be said to be run on business lines. We were told that there was a profit last year of £25,661 on the transactions of the State stations, in which the capital involved is £1,300,000. Even if that profit did exist—and I am going to show that it did not exist at all, but that there was actually a debit of £25,000—

The TREASURER: Who told you that?

Mr. VOWLES: The Auditor-General tells us that. We were told that certain taxation was imposed on certain classes of taxpayers money hand-over-fist, and that scarcely one of their pastoral holdings and grazing businesses. What do we find in the case of the biggest grazier in Queensland—that is the State? First of all, the Auditor-General tells us that their profit is a nominal one, but even that nominal profit is only 1.92 per cent. on the capital of £1,300,000. If they were running the business on business lines, then they should be getting the same profits as the pastoralists.

The TREASURER: What are they getting?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know, but we find that graziers and pastoralists pay large sums in income tax, showing that they have the business ability to make their businesses pay.

The TREASURER: That is an indictment of a public officer.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not. It is an indictment of the way in which public enterprises are run and of the ability of the Government to carry on ordinary business concerns. We find in the first place that their profits are fictitious—what are known as paper balances—and that they have inflated assets by putting false values on their stock. The Auditor-General, on page 6 of his criticism, says—

“On the 18th November ultimo, the inspector submitted to me a Trading or Stock Account showing the sales for 1919-20 as previously stated, also a Profit and Loss Account which exhibited a profit of £25,661 9s. 3d., but it was apparent that this result was arrived at through an inflation of the values of the cattle.”

There an independent witness tells us that the department is deliberately putting before the people a false balance-sheet. He goes on to say—

“I quite recognise that, up to a certain age, cattle a year older necessarily appreciate, but, on comparing the values adopted with those placed on cattle of similar age the previous year, the inspector found that they had, in some instances, been materially appreciated—in the case of three stations the increases were £17,000, £13,000, and £10,000 respectively.”

In those three items a sum of £40,000 is involved, and, after juggling with the figures, the total profit they are able to show is only £25,000.

The TREASURER: What is wrong with that?

Mr. VOWLES: It is dishonest. It is on a par with the balance-sheet presented to this House the first year the Labour Government sat on those Treasury benches. They showed a credit balance of £30,000, but the Auditor-General pointed out clearly that there should have been a debit of £100,000. The figures were juggled well—they were “fixed up”—by deliberately holding back till 1st July ordinary departmental payments that should have been made on the 30th June.

The TREASURER: Do you know that the gentleman in charge of State enterprises is the ex-Deputy Auditor-General?

Mr. VOWLES: You do not expect Mr. Austin to know the values of stock. It is a question of putting on the assets whatever value you like, and you can bring about whatever result you like. The reason I asked a question this afternoon about the Auditor-General's report is that we know there has been a depreciation of 50 per cent. in the value of live stock during the last twelve or eighteen months, and we are rather interested to know what values the Government put upon their live stock assets at 30th June. In other words, we want to find out whether they have been honest. At the bottom of page 6 of the same report the Auditor-General tells us—

“Depreciation at the rate of 5 per cent. has been allowed on station improvements and plant, as against 10 per cent. in previous years.”

Why was that rate altered? Merely because their balance was on the wrong side. That is one of the ways by which they can rig up a credit. The Auditor-General goes on to say—

“Schedule 14 (4) of the State Enterprises Act of 1918 empowers the Trade Commissioner to determine the rate of depreciation, and although the conditions were the same in each year, the alteration has the effect of reducing the depreciation charge in the Profit and Loss Account by £6,014—”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know the amount of depreciation varies.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know anything of the sort. The Auditor-General says, “although the conditions were the same in each year.” On the next page the Auditor-General says—

“Credit has been taken in the Keeroongooloo Station profit and loss

account for £2,719, surplus in the store account. This, in my opinion, is not correct, as I understand a substantial supply of stores came over with the station at the time of purchase, and were not taken into the books in the opening entries.”

There are three items involving just under £50,000, which should appear on the debit side of the ledger so that, if you put them in their proper place, instead of there being a profit of £25,000 there would be a debit of £25,000. We are asked to give large sums of money to a Government who are using it in these directions, very often without Parliamentary authority. We shall be asked at a later stage to validate certain things because Parliament has not been consulted in a constitutional way, and yet a gentleman like the Treasurer resents honest criticism.

The TREASURER: I welcome it, but I have not heard any yet.

Mr. VOWLES: I would be very sorry to have on record against my name the criticism in the Auditor-General's report, which I have disclosed to the House.

The TREASURER: Gross exaggerations!

Mr. VOWLES: It is the first time I have heard anybody say that the Auditor-General has been guilty of gross exaggerations.

The TREASURER: I am referring to your remarks.

Mr. VOWLES: I am quoting the Auditor-General's own words. I trust that hon. members will take every opportunity at this stage to ventilate the grievances that exist, and to point out to the people of Queensland those things which, during last session, they were deprived of the opportunity to point out on account of the organised efforts of the Government to stonewall their own Estimates.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): I think we have never met the House when conditions outside have been as bad as they are to-day, whether you look at them from the standpoint of the employer or of the employee. Has there ever been a time when so many people in Queensland have found themselves practically bordering upon starvation? That may apply to other parts of the world to some extent, but the position of this State should be absolutely different from that of any other country in the world, because, during the time of war, we were reaping very richly, and so were the State Government as the result of the taxation which they were gathering in freely and fast. Instead of the Government being impoverished, their returns were very largely increased. The Government cannot gainsay the fact that every year, as the result of increased taxation, there have been gathered into the Treasury immense amounts of money. Whilst in 1914-15 the direct taxation was under £1,000,000, last year it produced about £3,500,000. The taxation has been so great that the spending power of those who have money to spend has been diminished, and that is the reason why we find so many people to-day looking for employment. Has there ever been a time when the number of people going for relief has been so large? Even the Premier himself, the other day, made a statement—which he afterwards

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qualified—that a tremendous sum was being spent, and that it was no use raising money by golden caskets, because that would not provide sufficient to make provision for the unemployed. Is it a good thing that the manhood of the State and their families should have to receive charity from the Government? The better the man the more desirous he is of giving a return for what he gets. There is always the danger in handing out relief that those who are feeling the pinch most are not getting the greatest amount of relief. Wherever you go to-day you find honest men who want work and cannot get it. The Premier has been mean enough to say that behind the unemployed movement there has been the National party.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: If it were not unparliamentary I might give that "hear, hear," a very decided answer. (Laughter.) The hon. gentleman who made that statement knew it was not true, and I deny it. The unemployed have commenced to learn that it is not the man in office—who finds himself too busy, very often, to see them—who is the best friend of the worker, but it is the man who does his utmost to find employment who is most sympathetic. They tell me you cannot get anywhere near some Ministers unless someone intercedes for you. That does not apply to me; I have always received the greatest courtesy. To-day the State is absolutely up against it, and we have to turn completely round and inspire confidence. I heard in a speech the other evening some reference to the delegation to England. The fact is that the State, through the Ministry at present controlling it, stinks in the nostrils of those who have money to invest all over the world. The reason is that they have not honoured the scrap of paper they ought to have honoured. Look at the seasons we have had! Look at the conditions that have prevailed! Yet the position from the financial standpoint is as bad as it could be.

THE TREASURER: What do you know about finance?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I would not like to know as little as the hon. gentleman. (Opposition laughter.) Instead of men wanting to come here and invest, they are trying to get out.

MR. COLLINS: That is not true. Look at what appears in the financial columns of the "Courier."

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is true. If I were able to break confidences, I could prove it right up to the hilt. There are to-day men associated with Queensland who have done a very great deal to assist towards its development. They find themselves up against a Government who are trying to get at them at every turn. We have come to the limit—and the Government know it—to which taxation can be placed upon people, because they are in such a position that they cannot go on. What has been the policy of hon. gentlemen sitting on the other side? It has been "Squeeze! Squeeze! Take! Take!" I notice some of their supporters the other day—presumably men who support them in the country, not in the House—were talking about confiscation. Is that a factor which is going to help them? I do not think it is. I warn the Government they have to face the position as it is, and

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in all honesty say to the men who are prepared to assist in developing the country, "Come along and assist us to develop it." If they do that, it will be better for Queensland. What is the cause of a great deal of the trouble to-day? There has been a great deal of camouflage so far as the Cabinet are concerned. It was so in connection with the Savings Bank. I ask the Treasurer what has been the position in connection with the Savings Bank since it was taken over by the Commonwealth?

THE TREASURER: Very good.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Has any demand been made by the Commonwealth Bank in connection with that amount which the Government have at call?

THE TREASURER: No.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Has there not been a distinct shrinkage—

THE TREASURER: Oh, no. That shows how ignorant you are.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has dropped into the trap I thought he would drop into. (Loud Opposition laughter.) I did not finish my sentence. Taking the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State Savings Bank as it was, by comparison, has there not been a distinct shrinkage?

THE TREASURER: No. I will give you the figures.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman would say "No" to anything.

THE TREASURER: We received £240,000 from them the other day.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman has been receiving from them all the time. He has received from them so much that he is pretty well at the end of his tether; and so we are told that at the end of this year there is to be another £3,000,000 loan.

THE TREASURER: You are a shuffler.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman says I am a shuffler. I would like to ask what he is. I would not like to be in the position to-day of saying what the Treasurer really is in every capacity. I would be up against it if I did, and you, Mr. Speaker, probably would pull me up if I told you. One thing is certain—that the Government are up against it. We were told in connection with local authorities, when the Savings Bank Bill went through, of the great things that were going to happen. I am prepared to admit that Brisbane, and probably South Brisbane and some other local authorities, have received some help. But, speaking generally, local authorities have been refused assistance, and the stock cry of the Treasurer has been "Stony broke! Can't help you." Every deputation that goes there now is told that the Government is "stony broke."

[4.30 p.m.]

THE TREASURER: I don't use such vulgar terms.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is true nevertheless. The Government say, "We're stony broke; we cannot help you. Go to the Commonwealth Bank." I will give three cases in point. One is the Balmoral Shire Council, another is the Coorparoo Shire Council, and another is the Stephens Shire Council. Certain urgent works were required

to be carried out in these shires, and the Treasurer was interviewed in connection with them, and he said he could not find the money, and told the deputation to go to the Commonwealth Bank.

The TREASURER: That is incorrect. The Stephens Shire Council came along and asked for £10,000, and they found it would cost £25,000 to do the work.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I know nothing about the £10,000, but there is a bridge that is urgently required on the Logan road. An advance was sought of £3,500, £2,500 to be borne by the Stephens Shire Council and £1,000 by Coorparoo. We were passed over to the Commonwealth Bank. Now we have a reply from the Commonwealth Bank saying they cannot help us, and it is not because the council is not in a good financial position.

The TREASURER: Then they will not get the bridge.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What does the hon. gentleman care whether they get the bridge or not? He does not mind whether the people are inconvenienced or not. We were told, when a most objectionable agreement, so far as the State is concerned, was made between the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the State Savings Bank, that it was in the interests of Queensland. The reason for that agreement was revealed by the Treasurer himself. He feared a run on the State Savings Bank.

The PREMIER: Which was engineered by the Nationalists.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is absolutely untrue. We did all we could to prevent it, and to assist the bank. An agreement was made with the Commonwealth Savings Bank which means that the Savings Bank has gone from Queensland for twenty or twenty-five years. The position to-day is that the Government cannot assist the local authorities.

The TREASURER: I have been too kind to your local authorities.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am afraid that my local authorities have been too kind to the hon. gentleman. I want to show the public the connection between those circumstances and unemployment as it exists to-day. We are up against it simply because, as the leader of the Opposition pointed out this afternoon, a big amount of money has been spent in connection with State stations and State enterprises. A big load has been added to the public debt, and all these burdens have been laid upon the community, which, as a result, is unable to do very much in connection with unemployment. I don't know whether the Premier has lost sympathy with the unemployed. I do not know whether the hon. gentleman realises what the unemployed in the past have meant to him. I shall produce at a later period a circular which was issued just prior to the last elections, where the hon. gentleman said—

“Send back the gentlemen who are sitting to the left of the Speaker and you will have dismissals innumerable; but return us and there will be nothing of the kind.”

I wish the Premier would give me his new name for dismissals. He says there are no dismissals. He has a pet name for them.

The PREMIER: Here it is. Mr. Barwell said in South Australia that the Nationalists will retrench.

HON. W. H. BARNES: You notice how successful the hon. gentleman is in trying to sidetrack. There is this difference: the Premier of South Australia went to the country and said he was going to retrench.

The PREMIER: Is that your policy?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. Mr. Barwell said he was going to retrench, and he was returned on that policy. Nearly all the planks of this Government have gone by the board. What is the position to-day with regard to the conduct of the Government in connection with workers' dwellings? That has to do with finance. During the recess I went with two returned soldiers from Manly who wanted some assistance to go on a farm. They had £400 or £500 in their pockets. What was the answer given to them? “Our instructions are that there are no advances to be made, but if you come after the 1st of July we might be able to do something for you.”

The TREASURER: Did you want me to tell them a lie?

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. I want to say that to-day the Government are unable to help them to get workers' dwellings.

The TREASURER: We spent more last year than you spent in any year. I will give you the figures.

HON. W. H. BARNES: A great deal of the unemployment has been caused by the ineptitude of the Government in that particular regard. I would like to find out something from the Treasurer with regard to the maturing loans. If the columns of “Hansard” when the hon. gentlemen were in Opposition could be perused, and when certain loans were maturing which Mr. Denham, the late Premier, arranged for, they would find their cry all through was, “What are you going to do with the maturing loans?” Something was done. I would like to know whether the Government are going to get a temporary loan from the Bank of England to tide them over?

The TREASURER: We will have to renew them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The owners of stock are very difficult to find in the old country, and the hon. gentleman should know that.

The TREASURER: They cannot be found, because your crowd have got them tied up in the bag.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentlemen's crowd have so tied up the affairs of Queensland, that Queensland to-day is hobbled.

The TREASURER: You are always crying “stinking fish.”

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am sorry to say that, apparently, the hon. gentleman thought that some fish in which he was engaged was not a payable proposition, and knocked it down. There was a good deal of stink then. What is the use of the hon. gentleman trying to sidetrack a big public matter? There are £24,000,000 or £25,000,000 of loan money maturing in the years 1922, 1924, and 1926. Is that a small detail which this State is to sit down and take no notice of? The hon. gentleman knows that in 1924, £12,000,000 of loan money matures.

The TREASURER: We have to arrange in January for £1,000,000 worth of Treasury bills due to deficits for which your Government were responsible.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman is very unhappy in his interjection. I was Treasurer for a number of years, and I had a credit balance every year. In 1915 a circular was issued which was signed by the hon. gentleman and the Premier with regard to finance, but the deficits of this Government were greater in three or four years than our deficits in ten or fifteen years.

The TREASURER: As Treasurer, I have had a surplus each time.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I draw the hon. gentleman's attention to one way in which surpluses are created. According to the "Telegraph" of 2nd August last, the expenditure in the Public Works Department for 1920 was £15,967, whilst the expenditure for July of the present financial year was £99,636. But one time the Government deliberately—I believe it was when the hon. gentleman was Secretary for Railways—held back certain payments that were due in June in order to create a surplus.

The TREASURER: That is untrue, and I think deliberately untrue.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I accept the hon. gentleman's figures; but I accepted the figures quoted in such a respectable journal as the "Telegraph." But wherever you look you find evidence of the greatest incompetency. The trouble the Government are in with regard to unemployment is that their friends, and not the genuine workers, have been given Government positions, and the genuine workers have been put out or have been reduced.

The TREASURER: Those figures you have quoted about the Works Department are deliberately "framed up." The figures for last year were £15,967, and for this year £15,400.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I accepted the figures appearing in a reputable journal like the "Telegraph," but I would like to suggest that the figures which the hon. gentleman has given may be very much in keeping with some other figures that he has given. Before I sit down I urge the Government, if they are allowed to retain office, to give consideration to the needs of this great State, and to make it possible for men to assist in developing it. I would like to ask what is going to be the attitude of the Government in regard to the acquisition of the Brisbane trams. We all know that the city of Brisbane is spreading out, and, as the result of settlement in various suburbs, the people are calling out for an extension of the tram service. On the one hand the Brisbane Tramways Company say they will not do anything because their position is insecure, and on the other hand the Government have failed to complete any arrangements with the Tramways Company.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Read the Governor's Speech.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I did read it, and I notice that it is splendidly padded from beginning to end. The Government could see that their supporters were losing confidence in them, and that was why they had to pad the Speech, but the Government will find that it will not help them when they go before the electors later on.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): This is one of the few occasions when members have an opportunity of discussing grievances before Supply, and, in view of the fact that the finances of this State have got into an awful

muddle owing to the actions of the Government, I think it is only right that we should draw attention to the administration of the Government during the past twelve months. Certain members sitting behind the Government are treating this matter with a certain amount of levity. I said certain members sitting behind the Government treated this matter with levity, although some of their electors are unfortunate enough to be walking about in a state of starvation. That, however, does not trouble certain members. I think the position is a most serious one, and we as an Opposition are simply asking for information. In view of the unfortunate position of the State finances owing to the ineptitude of the present Administration we desire to know if the loan of £3,000,000 which the Government are asking for will be squandered by the Government in the same way as they have squandered money in the past. Will the Government continue to spend money on "wild cat" enterprises?

The TREASURER: Name one.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The fishing industry, for example, and the "Bar-ca-mul." We know that from £8,000 to £10,000 was spent on the "Bar-ca-mul" last year, and the return for twelve months amounted to only £800. If the Government had not interfered with private enterprise, and had allowed other sums of money to be legitimately expended in the ordinary course of private business, then men would not be "deflated" to-day—to quote the expression used by the Premier. I do not know whether it soothes the feelings of those unfortunate men to be told that they were not sacked, or dismissed, but were simply "deflated." (Opposition laughter.) The effect is just the same. Last year the Government received the largest revenue ever received by a Government in the history of the State, and, if that money had been spent in the way it should have been spent, it would not have been necessary for any men to be "deflated" in the railway service and in other branches of the service, and be cast out without an opportunity of obtaining employment elsewhere. So far as the railway service is concerned we know that the service to-day is worse than it has ever been in the annals of the State. We have a reduced service now with increased fares and freights. I notice in the Speech that the Government take credit for having built a number of wagons. Fancy, they actually built some wagons! (Opposition laughter.) They say nothing in the Speech about the deplorable condition of the engines and about tubes continually blowing out. The Government do not say anything about the railway plant not being attended to for years, and we hear nothing about the railway stations and railway buildings which are absolutely bare of paint. It is our duty to draw the attention of the Government to these matters, although it may be like pouring water on a duck's back. Then we have what might be termed the tragedy of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board. Some years ago I drew attention to certain facts in connection with the operations of that board and they were denied. In fact, I was told that action would be taken against myself if I made such a statement outside this Chamber. The fact remains that certain things were taking place, but they were hidden, and to-day we find that the Government, who backed up the Water and Sewerage Board on that occasion, are

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

not now prepared to find the necessary funds to carry out that important work.

The TREASURER: We gave them £400,000 last year—twice as much as they got from you in any one year.

HON. J. G. APPEL: At any rate, the Government do not give them sufficient money to enable them to carry on their operations. If the Government had only directed the affairs of the State in the same businesslike way as the Administration of which I was a member, the position in Queensland would be a good deal better than it is to-day. There would not be the dismissals from the State service that have taken place under the present Government, and there would not be the excessive taxation which has been imposed on the unfortunate taxpayers of Queensland. Surely there are some business men on the Government side of the House, and surely they must realise that, owing to the excessive taxation, certain industries in the State are not in the prosperous condition that they ought to be. Under different circumstances those industries would be affording employment to a large number of workers, whereas now they are compelled to dispense with their hands. There are manufacturing firms in Brisbane who employ, perhaps, twenty or thirty men each in normal times, but, owing to the maladministration of the present Government, they can only employ three or four men.

Mr. COLLINS: That was brought about by the war.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The hon. gentleman shows absolute ignorance on the subject. It is the maladministration of the Government that has brought about the unemployment in Queensland to-day. We know that the Treasurer will not advance the local authorities the amount of money they are asking for.

The TREASURER: Last year we gave them £685,000, which is two and a-half times more than you gave them in any one year.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The fact remains that you do not give them all they ask for, because I know they are making frequent requests from the Treasury Department. Practically on every occasion, with one or two exceptions, apparently political, when an application is made for a loan, no matter for what reason, the application is turned down.

The TREASURER: You could not expect the Government to give you an advance for that silly bridge you asked for.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I never asked for any bridge at all. I believe the hon. member suggested there should be a bridge there so that he could move it down to the Tweed Heads. (Laughter.) Let the hon. gentleman take this to heart that, having before them the maladroit, inept way in which the present Government have administered the finances

of the State, something like 95 [5 p.m.] per cent. of the electors decided that a similar type of man should not represent them upon the local authorities of Queensland. Have we not every reason to place before the electors of the State matters which come under our notice in the administration of a Government who ask for large sums of money without giving the House any particulars of the way in which they propose to spend it, especially having the knowledge that they have misdirected the revenues of the State in such a manner that they have caused the amount of unemploy-

ment and distress that exist in Queensland to-day? Perhaps the hon. gentleman will say that they do not exist—that unfortunate women and children are not in a state of practical starvation, yet it is unhappily the fact that the finances are in such a serious condition that unfortunate widows are receiving notifications to this effect—

“Owing to improvements in your condition the amount you are receiving for your child is to be discontinued.”

And there is no appeal. These are matters which it is the duty of every hon. member to bring before the notice of the Government, appealing to their bowels of mercy in the case of unfortunate widows and little children, and asking them whether it would not be far better to start, not with the poorest paid man, but at the top of the tree. What did Sir Robert Philp—the man who is persistently abused by men sitting opposite, some of whom are not fit to lick his boots, politically, of course—do when the revenues of the State fell? He started at the top and reduced the salaries of Ministers. What did this Government do when unfortunate men were walking about the streets, with their women and children starving at home? They increased their own salaries.

The TREASURER: You took your money, too.

HON. J. G. APPEL: They talk about the wage slaves and the wage servants! That is the way in which they themselves are reducing them to starvation. I do not know whether it is true or not, but even in that organ—it is not a newspaper—which represents the Labour party, we read that a deputation of these unfortunate men was unable to obtain an interview with the Minister. Evidently he keeps the hinges of the back door of his office very well oiled. (Laughter.) There has been an absolutely unnecessary increase in the number of Ministers, and there is in the party a sufficient number of supporters of the Administration either in office or receiving fees outside of office to secure to the Ministry a majority in their own parliamentary caucus.

The TREASURER: Your party tried to buy some of them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Country party?

The TREASURER: Yes, the alleged Country party.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The Treasurer is talking about buying men. He knows a lot about buying men. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: Yes, you tried to buy some of our party.

The SPEAKER: Order!

HON. J. G. APPEL: I should be sorry to think there were in this House any men who could be bought and sold, but apparently the hon. member has cast the slur on some of his own supporters that they are willing to consider offers of being purchased.

The TREASURER: I said you tried to buy them. You are trying now to buy them.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The present Administration are seeking every possible means of obtaining money. There are the Golden Caskets. I quite admit that I take a chance occasionally, but when the State enters upon a course of legitimised gambling it is bad for the State. I would like to know where the funds of these caskets are. I understand the Administration are holding anything between £60,000 and £70,000 as a result of this legalised gambling. Does that form part of the hon. member's surplus?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: No.

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HON. J. G. APPEL: In casting round for means of extracting more and more money out of the pockets of the unfortunate taxpayers of the State, the Government have—I believe illegally—imposed greater fees on transactions in the Titles Office. Why did not these men who cried out that there should be economy take advantage of the knowledge of the hon. member for Brisbane—the railway expert who stated that £250,000 could be saved to the Railway Department—the “gone millions department”—instead of extracting these increased fees? Under former Administrations an agreement to sell land on terms carried a stamp duty of half-a-crown, and the total amount of duty was due only when the payments were complete. That did not suit the hon. member, who came to the conclusion that they might be out of office when the payments were complete, and so imposed on men who are struggling to make a start the hardship of paying the whole sum when the agreement is made. Then, at one time stamp duty was not charged on what is called a letter of escrow. To-day the Government are actually charging stamp duty on that letter, lodged with the bank which holds the different titles on behalf of the vendor and the purchaser. Despite the enormous revenue they are receiving—the largest ever received in the State of Queensland—and despite the fact that they say that they are economising, we find by every quarterly statement that the expenditure is increasing at a greater rate than the revenue. Yet thousands of unfortunate men are being “deflated” from the public service, and cast out practically to starve. To-day the relief rations amount to something like £100,000 per annum. The unfortunate thing is that it is having the effect of pauperising men who do not desire to receive rations without working for them. It is having the effect of creating practically professional beggars, who go round from one police station to another. At Beenleigh they will receive rations, then go to the Coomera—only a few miles off—and receive rations there, then go to Southport—a few miles off—and receive rations there, double back to Nerang and receive rations there, and from there go to Tallbudgera—a few miles further off—and receive rations there. Is that a policy which is going to assist those members of the community so feelingly referred to on different occasions by the hon. member for Bowen as “slaves” and “wage serfs”? Is it going to uplift them? All the administration and legislation of the present occupants of the Treasury benches has had the effect of lowering those members of the community whom the Opposition have striven consistently to uplift, and whose condition we desire to see bettered. It is all very well for hon. members opposite to profess to be the only men who desire to see the improvement of this unfortunate class. They are sitting in luxury. They are not feeling the pinch of starvation. They have not to walk the streets not knowing where they are going to obtain rations to feed their unfortunate families. Is it proposed by the present Administration to adopt a different line of action, and to practise that economy which will place them in the position of not having to dispense with the services of the lower-paid members of the public service, and which will enable them to take from the ranks of the unemployed a large number of

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men by creating in the Government of the State that confidence which the present Administration have absolutely lost? They have been weighed and found wanting. It does not matter what department of the State's activity you inquire into, you will find there is practically stagnation. Take our system of State education. In our country districts, where children frequently have to go many miles to school, while there was money available to pay for two extra Ministers, it was not available to erect a little veranda in order that the children might have a little shade in summer. Surely, these things must come under the notice of hon. members opposite! Surely, they must realise that the line which they have taken, and are taking, is not for the advancement of the State and the prosperity of its people. We know that amongst them are most worthy men. How is it that they have become so warped politically that they cannot see the dangerous path they have been treading, and that, if confidence is to be restored, if we are to advance, if the interests of the unfortunate members of the community are to be safeguarded, some different line must be adopted? If they do realise it, why do they not adopt a different policy? It surprises me that hon. gentlemen cannot realise the mad political course on which they have embarked, the chaos which they have caused in the finances of the State, and the fact that, owing to the exactions they have made, and which have reached breaking point, industries have been abandoned, and are being abandoned. When hon. members opposite sat on the Opposition benches they criticised the Government of which I had the honour to be a member. When we met the House in the first week in July or the last week in June they cried out that Parliament should have been called together in May. They have out-Heroded Herod. There is not a thing they could have mishandled which they have not mishandled. There is a general feeling of anxiety which does not permit of persons embarking on enterprises which would afford employment for large numbers of men. It would be far better if we could cast aside some of our partisan feeling and unite in a policy of legitimate and equitable economy whereby the taxation might be lessened and confidence restored, and, with a restoration of confidence, the prosperity and advancement of the people of the State assured.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The greatest sympathy for the unemployed exists on this side of the House. We have listened this afternoon to speeches by members of the Opposition. The workers had an opportunity of judging them when they were in a better condition than we are to-day, and had not to face the extreme difficulties which we have to face owing to the financial crisis which exists throughout the world. We know what they did with the unemployed at that time. This Government are facing an issue brought about by the conduct of our opponents in sending certain people abroad. In spite of all that, this side of the House is standing up, and intends to stand up, to its obligations. If the workers are led astray by the promises of the capitalistic class, it is the workers' funeral. They may defeat us, but they will beat themselves. The hon. member for Albert spoke

about the unfortunate men who are out of work. The only time hon. members opposite trust the people is when the people give them a majority vote. When the people vote according to the way they should vote, hon. members opposite say they should not be trusted. If the people vote against their own welfare, they say they should be trusted. Let me quote from "Hansard" of 1920, page 520, on the Local Authorities Acts Amendment Bill. The Hon. J. G. Appel said—

"He proposed to support the amendment"

It was an amendment to defeat the Bill—

"He had been a landlord, and had always given the local authority vote to those who occupied his premises. Hon. members opposite talked about the man with the swag on his back, who had blazed the trail and developed the State, but he had been to a certain extent a parasite on the State."

Later on the hon. member said—

"Not one member sitting on his side of the House was opposed to that proposition, because, more or less, those people contributed to the funds of the particular local authority. But to say that the parasite of the community—the criminal scum of Queensland—were to exercise a controlling influence in the election of representatives to local authorities was absolutely opposed to democracy and to the settlement and development of this fair State."

Hon. J. G. APPEL: And they are your supporters, too. The criminals support the Government. I say it again.

Mr. BRENNAN: The people of Queensland must appreciate the hypocrisy of men of the class of the hon. member who called the men who blazed the trail parasites and criminal scum. The men who go to Southport for rations are parasites, according to the hon. member for Albert. The people must know that these men are not sincere when they profess sympathy for those who are out of work.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I think it is rather fortunate that I should follow the hon. member for Toowoomba, especially as he has referred to a delegation which went home from Queensland for purposes best known to themselves. We find the hon. member for Toowoomba reiterating the statement which has been denied in this House time and time again, that the delegation had any support from this side of the House. He persists in reiterating and emphasising that this delegation was responsible for the evils which Queensland is labouring under at the present time. I want to quote in rebuttal of that the signed statement of the Hon. Lewis McDonald, the secretary of the Labour party, and a man whom the hon. member for Toowoomba dare not contradict. (Government laughter.) This is what the Hon. Lewis McDonald says—

"The Tories hoped and prayed for the success of the malignant mission, but it failed lamentably."

He holds the opinion that the mission failed lamentably, and we have the hon. member for Toowoomba coming to an intelligent House like this and asking us to take his

word in preference to that of the secretary of the Labour party. Any important document

which comes from the Government [E.30 p.m.] side of the House is signed by their official secretary, and it carries the weight of the party behind it; and even the Premier dare not deny the fact. No sensible man or woman in the community believes a statement by a man who makes random statements of this description. When hon. members opposite go on to the public platform they say, "Our credit has not been impaired; look at what the Hon. Lewis McDonald has said," and when they come into this House they say, "Our credit is impaired." The hon. member for Toowoomba must be more correct in his statements, if he hopes to visit this House after the next election. The Premier said that Mr. Barwell, the Premier of South Australia, said that the Liberal Government would retrench. But the Premier of South Australia, who is a Liberal Premier, went to the country with that as a part of his policy. He told the country that he would retrench, and the country returned him with a majority, and to-day he is Premier of South Australia, so that there is nothing underhand about that. The Premier of South Australia was honest, and said that they were going to do it. But let me refer to the Queensland Government party. Here is another pamphlet issued by them—

"The increased expenditure could not be avoided except by starving the departments, retrenching the public service. . . . That is the Tory policy, but it is not the Labour policy. . . ."

The difference between the statement made by the Premier of South Australia and the statement made by the hon. gentlemen opposite is that the Premier of South Australia was not bound by any unseen hand behind the throne, but he made a statement on behalf of his Government and was elected. On the other hand, the people sitting on the Government side of this House made a statement which now proves that they were either insincere or else they were endeavouring to deceive the people. I would like to ask what the statement made by Mr. Barwell has to do with the condition of affairs in Queensland? If the Government contend that it has something to do with the affairs of Queensland, then I claim that the affairs of Russia have something to do with Queensland, because there are hon. members on the other side, to say nothing of their official organs, who advocate Bolshevism. If the Government were honest, they would vacate office rather than sacrifice their principles. I have a cutting here taken from a journal depicting a worker with fallen head coming home to his wife and family, and with sorrow in his face telling them that he has been unable to find employment, and there you see a dejected family. Why? Was it because the State did not afford opportunity? No; the State has been so badly managed that there is no work for them to do.

Mr. COLLINS: All brought about by the war.

Mr. FRY: Then we have this very important document, "The Unemployed Clarion." I do not know whether unemployment has caused the Premier a moment's unrest. I think unemployment is due to the fact that the Government have been prodded behind by the

Mr. Fry.]

extreme element. I am unwilling to believe that the gentlemen sitting on the Government benches would of their own free will and accord allow Queensland to drift into the condition it is in to-day; but we know very well that the extremists in the party supporting them are too strong for them. They have been devoting their attentions to discrediting private enterprise with the object of building up State enterprises in their places. We are informed in the book "Socialism at Work," which was issued by the Government, that State enterprises were embarked upon with the object of making a profit for the people. To-day we are faced with very great losses on those undertakings. The Government have found that trading has not been in the interests of profit-making. This is what the Secretary for Mines said, according to the "Daily Standard," with reference to closing down the State coal mine at Baralaba:—

"Mr. Jones, in the course of an interview to-day, said that in his opinion State enterprises depended upon them getting a fair deal from the men engaged therein. The men at Baralaba had decided, he understood, to limit their output to 2½ tons per man per day. At the rates being paid, the cost of the production was 17s. 6d. per ton, and the price obtained for the 120 tons produced per day was 14s. 9d. per ton. He was not going to be the fool employer, and let it go out to the world that they were working an 8-foot seam of coal, and putting it on the trucks at a loss of 2s. 9d. per ton."

The Government declared themselves to be socialistic in all their undertakings as disclosed in the book called "Socialism at Work." One thing that has prevented the Government from making a success of all their socialistic enterprises is that they have failed to master the very moot problem of human nature. The Government have not been able to mould men like a machine to do their bidding. The Bolsheviks have failed to do it in Russia, and they will always fail to do it where socialistic enterprises are undertaken. Look at Russia to-day. It is nothing but devastation and ruin, just because they tried to make machines of the men, instead of dealing with the human element. We know that the Maker of all mankind has placed in every man certain qualities to encourage him to propel himself forward and make every advancement possible for himself. Anyone who tries to alter that is sure to fail, just as they failed in Russia. We know that when a union is formed all the members start level, but eventually they appoint one man as secretary, and straight away that secretary wants to oust a Minister out of his job, and get it for himself. That is human nature. Before the Government talk about "Socialism at Work," they will have to deal with the human element as it exists to-day. It is a pity that we have numbers of people walking about our streets to-day starving and hungry. It is all because of the socialistic enterprises of the Government, and because you cannot expect men to be servile to the dictates of a machine.

Mr. HARTLEY: You stated just now that the Baralaba mine showed a loss, but, as a matter of fact, it shows a profit.

Mr. FRY: I quoted from the statement of the Minister for Mines. I might refer to a splendid speech delivered by the Premier,

[*Mr. Fry.*

Mr. Theodore, in Melbourne, when he used these words—

"There was evident in the Labour movement an exotic growth that, if permitted to remain, would destroy the movement, and render ineffective the splendid work of a quarter of a century. He referred to the poison known as I.W.W'ism. (Uproar.) Great advantages for workers had been won by evolutionary means, and now these traitors to their class preached revolution, with or without bloodshed, and were endeavouring to embroil the Labour and union movements in that foolhardy policy. They were prepared to throw over arbitration awards. They preached revolution, sabotage, and bloodshed to gain what the workers could take by constitutional means any moment they cared to exercise their vote. (Applause and dissent.) The I.W.W'ites were the worst enemies of Labour."

I give the Premier credit for making such a sensible speech, but I blame him for not standing up like a man for what he considers to be his principles. If the Premier had stood up to his principles, and if the Government to-day had a free hand, Queensland would not have reached the verge of bankruptcy. Queensland is often referred to as the "Queen State" of the Commonwealth, and, if it were properly governed, it would be the wealthiest State of the Commonwealth. Queensland is studded with wealth from north to south and east to west, and we could maintain millions of people if we had proper government here. If Queensland were given the opportunity of proper development our primary industries would benefit, and the manufacturing industry in the large centres would also prosper. It would be much better to manufacture from our raw material in our own State, instead of exporting the raw materials and importing the article in its manufactured state. We have all the opportunities in Queensland to make this State the brightest gem in the British Empire, if we only had proper management. If we had a Government that considered the needs of the State above the requirements of party it would be better for the State in every way. The present Government, however, cannot rise above party, otherwise we would have a sound developmental policy for this country. I will show what the inevitable result of the policy of the Government is going to be by quoting from an article on Russia, written by a supporter of the Government policy.

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will connect his remarks with the question before the House.

Mr. FRY: I will do that, and I will show the result of Bolshevism in Russia to-day. It says in this article which I have in my hand, referring to Russia—

"Everybody is in need of clothing. Most of the people are without boots and shoes. The hospitals need linen, medicines, and disinfectants. The schools are short of books, desks, pens, and pencils. The peasants lack machinery. There is a universal scarcity of fuel.

"In Russia there is also conscription of labour. All but the old and infirm must work. The eight-hour day is a myth. They work twelve or sixteen hours. They are obliged to undertake work chosen for them. Their wages are fixed for them. They must go where they

are sent. They may not leave their work without permission. If ill, soldiers visit the home to discover if it is a genuine case. They may not travel on the railway without a pass. They cannot buy anything with a permit from the authorities. They must purchase most things at the Soviet stores; the others have been closed."

The SPEAKER: Order! I cannot allow the hon. gentleman to quote long extracts out of a journal. He can quote any remarks which have any bearing on the question, but he cannot read lengthy extracts from any journal.

Mr. FRY: I am quoting from a report made by Mrs. Philip Snowden, who has been known for years as being just as extreme a socialist as her husband, the Labour M.P. in England. She went to Russia to find out for herself the state of things that existed there. The Premier quoted South Australia, and I wish to quote Russia. After Mrs. Snowden went to Russia she came back disgusted with the state of things she found there, and she advised the workers of Great Britain to have nothing to do with them.

I hope that the people of Queensland will have nothing to do with Bolshevism in any shape or form, and that they will take the advice of those Britishers who have been to Russia and who have seen the awful consequence of this form of Government, rather than the advice of the theorists who are sitting as a junta behind the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I recognise that the vote for Supply has to be passed in order to carry on the services of the State, but I do not consider it is right for the Government to come down at the eleventh and three-quarter hour, as it were, and rush through Supply in this way. It seems to me to be the invariable custom to rush Supply through in one day, and we do not get sufficient time to discuss all the matters that we wish to refer to. If we were to discuss all the questions that arise under Supply, it would take us more like three months, whereas we have to put it through in one day. One great weakness in connection with the Government, is that they have no foresight. They cannot look ahead. They embark upon schemes without knowing what will be the outcome of them, and they do not seem to know what will be the result of their ventures. Hon. members will remember that in 1915 the Government came in with their great policy of cheap food for the people. They got all their State enterprises under way, and heralded them abroad through the little book called "Socialism at Work." This was circulated throughout the United Kingdom, and by various pictures and articles they endeavoured to show the people that their socialistic endeavours were successful, and that they were giving cheap food to the people of Queensland. Not one of the State enterprises has been a success. They have all been a calamitous failure, and

[7 p.m.] the Government to-day should bow their heads in humiliation at having in their self-confidence and inexperience landed the State in such a quagmire of disaster as we see to-day. If the people had been told the truth in the election of 1918, or at the last election, instead of the misleading statements and half-truths which were made, the Government would never have got back to power. It is only now that the people are realising the mismanagement of

the Government, and we shall see a very different state of affairs when the Government next go to the polls. I wish to deal with some of the State enterprises, the indirect loss on which is far greater than the direct loss, owing to the confidence which has been destroyed in the State; but the loss we can actually see is also tremendous. The Government bought the State stations, ostensibly to give cheap meat to the people, yet they bought the stations in the most inaccessible parts of the State—in the Cape York Peninsula and all round the Gulf country—from which they could not market the beef in the large cities and towns of Queensland. If they were going to give cheap meat to the people, why did they go to the uttermost parts of the State to buy the stations? That showed either gross negligence, or great incapacity, or when they came to buy the stations they had forgotten their mission and were actuated by some other motive. They were going to give cheap meat to the people, and yet they bought stations at tremendous prices. No private individual has ever paid anything like the prices which the Government paid for these stations. How could the Government give cheap meat to the people when they paid such fabulous prices for the stations? They bought the stations from some of the wealthiest men in the community. They talk about profiteers, and yet there is no one in Queensland who has reaped more advantage to-day than the vendors of these stations to the Government. The Government may have supplied from those stations 5 per cent. of the meat to the State butchers' shops. They have been supplying the shops with meat obtained under forced contracts with the meat companies. The Government paid tremendous prices for the cattle stations even when prices were high. I remember being in the North when the first purchases were made, and the people were absolutely staggered. The whole pastoral industry was demoralised. Since then a change has come over the scene, and there has been an enormous fall in the value of stock. The nominal loss to-day on the State stations which were bought at £1,500,000 is something like £500,000. Who pays this loss? People may say that it is gone and done with—that it is finished; but it is not. About £800,000 of the purchase money has not yet been paid; it is owing in debentures due about 1928. We shall have to meet them then, and, if cattle do not go up in value, we shall have to pay for something that does not exist. Our children and our children's children will each year out of the revenue of the State have to find money to pay the interest on debentures issued on those enterprises of the Government which have entailed such an enormous loss. How can any State carry on under such circumstances? We have been built up on a wonderfully sound foundation, otherwise the State could not stand the maladministration and lack of judgment displayed by the Government. In a year's time we shall feel more than we do to-day the burden of these State enterprises. The Government know that they have been atrocious failures, and they would be very pleased to-day to give up the reins of Government. I want to deal with the Auditor-General's report on the State stations, according to which they show a profit of £25,000. In that profit of £25,000 they include a sale of 14,000 odd cattle in the accounts for last financial year,

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although the sale was not made till 15th November. But that did not bring the profit up enough, and they went further and inflated the value of the cattle. Notwithstanding that a great fall in the value of stock was looming, they increased the value of 187,000 cattle by 8s. 1d. per head, or something over £70,000. They went further than that. They altered the allowance for deaths from 10 per cent. to 5 per cent., so as to improve the profit. Then there were a lot of surplus stores on another station, which was a walk-in walk-out sale, which they credited, after twelve months, to inflate the profit. It all shows that the profit on the State stations shown as £25,000 was in reality a loss of over £130,000. If that balance-sheet was submitted to the public by a company, the directors would be thrown out of office, and they would probably be sued and put in gaol.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. FLETCHER: What can we think of the Government, which should be an example to others, coming forward and passing a balance-sheet like that, and trying to mislead the people into the belief that the stations are profitable? The whole of the State enterprises are very much the same. Not one of them has been a success, and it is awful to think that posterity has to carry the burden of debt which this Government has piled up. I would not care if the Government spent £10,000,000 every year, if it was well spent and productive; but, if we go on as we are doing, our financial status will break down; it cannot possibly continue with such a load. We have not felt the full effect of the stress yet; there is more to come. You can feel it in every direction. Day labour in some things may be all right, but to follow it promiscuously in all our dealings is madness. Consider the enormous waste involved in the construction of our schools—waste, not by paying big wages, but by the disorganisation that ensues through Government work on small jobs. Contractors could do the work for from 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. less, and do it better. The waste has been so great that it would have sufficed to build all the schools now required in Queensland. (Government laughter.) The Government, shortsightedly, have built little schools in growing country districts—I could name four or five in my own electorate—which are too small in two or three years. It is wonderful that the Government have continued so long, because they have misrepresented things to the people, who now, by necessity, are beginning to realise what they ought to have been told. I believe that people should be ingenious, and tell the actual truth; but at election time we hear the old cry that any old thing will do; any lies may be told; and the consequence is that the electors do not know what to believe; and, when a man comes along and tells them the truth, they think it is a lie the same as the others.

I want to say a few words now about Mount Morgan, because every day that goes by the calamity continues. It is beyond the comprehension of man that such a position should continue, with all its attendant unemployment and suffering, and I am quite sure that, if the agitators had kept out of the way, the ballot would have gone in favour of work. It is ridiculous to think that they are to wait for work until copper advances in price to such a point as will enable the company to pay the old rate of wages. It is an outrage on our civilisation.

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Mr. HARTLEY: They had a profit of £400,000, with the reserve fund, in the last balance-sheet.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member does not know what he is talking about. If he wants to debate Mount Morgan, let him come on the public platform with me. The hon. member for Mount Morgan made, through the Press, a very clever and ingenious statement; but it was not very ingenious. The Premier, instead of doing what he knew was the right thing, looked on passively, and took no action—just as he did in connection with the strikes at Townsville, when months and months of work, and probably hundreds of thousands of pounds, were lost to the country. The Arbitration Court did exactly the same. It told the men what they ought to do, but, although it had increased the wages when times were prosperous, it took no action whatsoever when there was a decline in metals. It was absolutely wrong; it should have made a fresh award for Mount Morgan, and dealt courageously with the position. As I said last session, I believe in arbitration, and the arbitration judges should be the highest men in the land. They carry a tremendous responsibility, and, unless they live up to it, arbitration is going to be a failure.

Mr. DASH: The Court fixed the wage. Why should the men accept a reduction?

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member does not know anything about it. The time will come when the hon. member for Mount Morgan will have to face the electors, and we shall see what they think of his judgment. And the position affects not only Mount Morgan, but the whole of Queensland. In my district, for instance, you will see heaps of timber for use at Mount Morgan, but the owners are unable to get it through and get their money, and the consequence is that there is unemployment. On the other hand, let us look at the position of Chillagoe, in regard to which the Secretary for Mines has made some of the most ridiculous and irresponsible statements I have ever heard. When the Chillagoe and Etheridge Railways Bill was before this House, the Premier said unequivocally on two occasions that the Chillagoe mines and smelters would not be worked unless they could pay for themselves—that they would only be run as a business proposition, and, if they could not pay their way, they would be closed down just as any other business concern—they would not be subsidised. The very next moment he does the very reverse; his mind must be a jumble of contradictions. The consequence is that to-day the Chillagoe mines are paying the old award wages, and losing probably £20 to £25 on every ton of copper produced, and storing it until the price has advanced. It may not advance for a hundred years. (Government laughter.) Hon. members may well laugh, but they must remember that copper is £72 per ton, and it is a fine price. I do not say that wages have to come below the cost of living, but the cost of living must come down with the drop in wages. In passing, I might say that I did not notice that the hon. member for Mount Morgan made mention of the fact that they had at Mount Morgan a co-operative store which provides the miners with groceries and similar things at 15 per cent. below what the outside public have to pay. The State cannot stand such unbusinesslike proceedings as we see at Chillagoe, and the

sooner the Government realise the hopelessness of the position, and reduce the wages so that they can pay their way, the better. Do not forget that the cost of living comes down at the same time. The whole community cannot stop working, as the people have done at Mount Morgan. It is wonderful that we have got along as well as we have, with 1,700 or 1,800 men going out of employment at once. The Government should realise that they have a great duty to perform, and they should be doing it, instead of sitting down watching the people who are unemployed, and the suffering of their dependents. Yet they claim to represent the people! It is a scandal, and it is a pity the people do not rise en masse and rebel against it.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I cannot let Supply pass without commenting upon the fact that the Government are living beyond their means and making no provision for the future. In 1918-19 we had accumulated deficits of £531,439. There was a surplus of £26,833 in 1919-20, and a surplus of £9,830 last year. Deducting these two from the accumulated deficits, we find that there is £544,776 which we have to make up.

The PREMIER: That is inaccurate.

Mr. KERR: Those figures are quite accurate. They are the accumulated deficits for four years, and there has been no endeavour on the part of the Government to make them up.

The PREMIER: Yes, we have paid off £145,000 this year.

Mr. KERR: £145,000 from the Golden Casket funds. (Laughter.) I will quote the figures of the Auditor-General, which are the only figures we have before us.

The PREMIER: You are wrong. There are other figures in the Governor's Speech.

Mr. KERR: I could quote figures from the Governor's Speech in regard to soldiers' settlements which are incorrect. The loan expenditure of Queensland amounts to £68,000,000, on which we are carrying an interest bill of £2,930,703, so we are absorbing our revenue to the extent of 23 per cent. There has been no provision made for the loans falling due next year amounting to £3,000,000, or for those falling due in 1924 and 1925 to the amount of £5,000,000.

The TREASURER: How do you know that?

Mr. KERR: If you are not game to tell the people what arrangements you have made, you are not fit to occupy those benches. In regard to the Trust Funds we are behind to the extent of £500,000. In 1914 a definite plan was laid down which, if it had been followed, would have prevented Queensland's reputation being blasted in the eyes of other people in the world, and we would not have been faced with the situation of having no credit. I agree that the financial situation throughout the world to-day is not of the best. There are many factors which have to be taken into consideration. We have advised the Government from time to time exactly where they have failed, and no consideration has been given to our advice. The Treasurer used some fine phrases in his Financial Statement. One was—

"Criticism is always welcome, but abuse does not help."

According to the last Financial Statement our revenue, exclusive of any investments of loan money, is £6,000,000, and our disbursements £4,000,000. I have not the details of the last financial year, but the same thing has happened. There has been an excess of

expenditure which could have been saved. In the ordinary channels of revenue—taxation, licenses, and other things—we exceed our requirements by over £2,000,000. That £2,000,000, which in 1914 would have been shown as a surplus, to-day is being absorbed, for the reason that the loan money has been expended unproductively. I am fortunate in having been able to secure two schools in my electorate. There are other additions which have been turned down. It is a shame that some children should have to stand in the winds underneath the schools because that £2,000,000 has had to be utilised for the purpose of paying interest on unproductive works. The increase in the income tax in the last five years has been 214 per cent. The land tax, which was not in existence prior to this Government coming into power, increased in five years by 90 per cent.; and the stamp duty increased by 105 per cent. For the financial year 1920-21 the income derived from stamp duty decreased by £27,000 as compared with 1919-20. The lack of credit is being reflected in every business. The building of railways is only of a temporary nature, and in five or six months those men will again be on the labour market. We also find that the stamp duties have increased in five years by 105 per cent.

This sort of thing operates right [7.30 p.m.] down from primary production until it reaches every avenue and every trade where men are out of work to-day. There is one feature which the Government have never realised, and that is the effect of taxing the resources of the State. We have heard of the enormous wealth of Queensland, as connected with what is known as "stored up labour." The Government should get away from those ideas that cannot be brought down to the ground, and realise that the only taxable resources of any community are what the people can pay. We find the ordinary average return of revenue from the various public works and services throughout Australia is something like 55 per cent., and the return from these public works and services in our own State during the last four or five years has been less than in any other State in Australia, being only 35 per cent., which is a reduction of 20 per cent. Another form of taxation which has fallen off is the totalisator tax, notwithstanding that we have five or six race meetings a week, and notwithstanding that the Government collects unclaimed dividends. The Treasurer is certainly an adept at the use of words. He says—

"What is wanted is a clearer perspective and a more common-sense view of our responsibilities. Queensland must be developed, our lands must be settled, our producers must be encouraged, our manufacturers stimulated, and our workers given justice."

I cannot possibly think that the Treasurer believes that statement. Is he looking towards the question of maturing loans? Has he ever gone into the question of a sinking fund? To-day our assets are disappearing, and we are utilising our loan moneys to meet unforeseen circumstances, such as floods, instead of providing for them out of revenue. The State is in such a position financially that they cannot meet such things legitimately, and have to appeal to illegitimate means. The area under cultivation in Queensland has decreased by 200,000 acres; the number of cattle, sheep, and pigs has decreased. We have a return from the

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Commonwealth showing that in four years, 1911-1915, the amount received from the Commonwealth increased by £139,000, yet we find that in the four-year period, 1916-1920, the increase was only £59,000, or a decrease of 42 per cent. The Land Tax has increased in five years by 90 per cent., but we find from the return prepared by Mr. Edkins, who has already been mentioned in this House, that in 1917 there were 3,193 taxpaying pastoralists whilst there were only 2,513 in 1919. We find the taxation decreased by 12.1 per cent. in 1919 which shows that nothing has been done in that connection. Very often people find it difficult to know exactly why loan money reduces the money available for local loans. The reason is that businesses are worked on overdrafts. Loans which have been floated by the State have been advanced more or less by financial institutions, notably insurance companies. Their function is to advance to the industries money to allow them to carry on and expand. I would like, in this connection, to quote the remarks of a friend of the Government—Mr. Storey, the Premier of New South Wales. He is credited with this statement—

“Every million of money raised locally, you want to remember, withdraws that amount from other channels and makes it increasingly difficult for the people who advance it to find the necessary money to carry on private industry.”

Now, that is the situation that has been created in Queensland to-day. If money is taken away from channels where it could be utilised to absorb labour, it stands to reason that industries must suffer. The money which ought to be absorbed in industries to create permanent work has been directed into other channels, owing to Government interference, and that has brought about unemployment. We know quite well that the financial institutions of Queensland have carried the Government on their backs for the last five or six years. Owing to the Government's lack of credit, it has caused these financial institutions to restrict their advances to the people, and that has brought about unemployment. The people showed they were sensible during the last municipal elections, and also in the Maranoa election. As a matter of fact, they were sensible in the last State elections, when they gave the parties in Opposition 20,000 more votes than were given to the Government, and they will continue to be sensible the next time, when they will have a chance of getting rid of this Government. The financial institutions have been responsible for carrying the Government on their shoulders, because they advanced to the extent of £19,000,000 during the past six years. The coin held by the banks is £2,249,632, and the notes held amount to £4,800,000 odd, and the bullion to £61,000, showing an expenditure of over £11,000,000 which the banks and financial institutions have been providing for this country. The Government have got no credit, and the financial institutions have had to restrict traders, and the result has been unemployment. Unless some restriction is made, we shall have the same thing occurring as occurred in 1893, when the banks went smash throughout Australia, owing to the lack of credit. The banks forfeited their credit by the depositors calling on them, and, when the people of Queensland call on the Government at an early date, they will forfeit their credit also. Notwithstanding that we

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produce more boots in Queensland than ever to-day, there are numbers of people walking round bootless, and, notwithstanding that this is a glorious country, there are hundreds and thousands of men going about looking for work. Business firms have to seek refuge in the court, because they have no option, as they have their stores packed up, and they are unable to realise on their stock. The Treasurer has taken a great interest in this debate, and I might quote him some statistics from the “Industrial Gazette,” to show him the position in Queensland in regard to unemployment. The figures are most alarming. Taking each 1,000 workers, we find the numbers of unemployed in each State in 1912 and 1920 were as follows:—

	1912.	1920.	Increase.
Queensland ... 46 ...	163 ...	11.9 per cent.	
N.S.W. ... 50 ...	69 ...	1.9 per cent.	
Victoria ... 67 ...	736 per cent.	
South Australia 51 ...	51 ...	—	
		Decrease.	
Tasmania ... 34 ...	304 per cent.	
West Australia 58 ...	48 ...	1 per cent.	

Owing to the unemployment, the Government have to resort to doles to keep men from starving. It is like giving meat to a dog. The only difference is that the dog is able to live on the meat that is given to it, but the community is not able to live on the doles given out by the Government to-day. In 1914-1915 the Government paid out £4,869 in relief, while in the year 1920 the sum amounted to £78,859.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: You would rather let the community starve.

Mr. KERR: There is no possibility of anyone starving. It is because of the lack of credit that the Government have created, and the restriction of advances by the banks, that unemployment exists. That is the logical conclusion of the administration of this Government. The State butcheries alone cost £135 a week as a State undertaking. There is too much State competition altogether. The Government have been interfering altogether too much with the general trade of the country. We have been told that the whole world is looking towards Queensland. Unfortunately, that is so, and the way they sum up the situation is the Government's lack of credit. We have all read about the economy board of the Railway Department. I am not going to refer to the large incubus that the Railway Department is to-day, but I will deal with that when speaking on the “no confidence” motion later on. When that motion comes on we shall be able to place more extensively before the people of Queensland the whole position regarding the present Government. We find that the Treasurer takes a delight in writing out little speeches and handing them to the papers, where they appear very nicely each day. We can gain knowledge only by reading.

The TREASURER: Why do you make this savage attack on me? (Laughter.)

Mr. KERR: You are the man who is responsible. We find that the appropriation of £12,170,612 was exceeded by £419,031, and the Treasurer, who made a very definite statement on this matter, in his own department exceeded his estimate by £164,000.

The TREASURER: Out of that you know we paid £145,000 to—

Mr. KERR: I do not care what excuse you put up. The Treasurer will be able to

tell the people of Queensland why he makes statements in the Press which he is not able to substantiate. If I am making a misleading statement, then it is his duty to get up and refute it in this House. This House, unfortunately, has never been consulted in regard to the expenditure. The Government are carrying on more or less like a school boy. In regard to expenditure, they get a blue pencil and say, "We will save £1,000 here and £200 there, and have a few more things like the economy board in the Railway Department." They forget that the fundamental principle of finance has a basis—(laughter)—and that basis is interdependent on the policy of the Government. The policy of the Government has been at fault everywhere. It is very regrettable to note that the £12,500,000 revenue that this Government were able to handle last year will not be received during the next few years. Already the revenue has dropped, but there has been no attempt, in any shape or form, to meet the altered position. This State has wonderful potentialities. Every visitor who has been here has noted it. His Excellency the Governor has commented on Queensland's vast potentialities; but it appears that, though visitors and we, as an Opposition, can see the position, the Government, have failed utterly to do so. It has been apparent to everyone excepting to members of the Government that Queensland is gradually getting into a very deplorable position. We have been governed by socialistic habits—habits that have developed into second nature, and that nature has been cultivated. Its growth is abnormal to-day, and it is time that the expenditure was brought within reason. There is no legislation brought in to deal with the unemployed. Parliament should have been called together months ago to decide this question of Mount Morgan. They did not have the courage to wipe out the Arbitration Court, as they say certain things must be done by the Arbitration Court. Parliament should have been called together to discuss the whole business. I have many questions to ask in regard to the finances of this State, and one of the most important will be, "What is happening to the £2,000,000 advanced by the Commonwealth for soldiers' settlements?" That is another matter about which I give due warning, and I trust that the Government will be able to give an explanation that will satisfy the people of Queensland.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): We are meeting under somewhat unique conditions this afternoon. I heard the Premier say that he would refuse to answer questions while there was a want of confidence motion on the business-sheet, and I was somewhat surprised that he should follow that statement by asking us to suspend the Standing Orders in order to get Supply. It is only right that the Government should have got rid of the want of confidence motion before asking for Supply.

The PREMIER: I am quite willing to accept the challenge at any moment and bring it to an issue.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The man in control of this House is the Premier himself. The challenge has been thrown down by the leader of the Opposition, and the Government is responsible for the present position. Do the Government consider they are giving honest

value for honest work? They talk about the worker not earning his money, but let me ask the Government do they consider that by closing this House from December last till August of this year they are earning their money, or that they are working in the interests of the country? We are justified before Supply is granted in calling attention to the grave position in which we find ourselves—a position brought about, not by the people, but by a majority of the men sitting behind the Government. There is no member on this side of the House who is prepared to give a moment's consideration to the question of continuing the present Government in office. As has been repeatedly stated this afternoon by several speakers, they have lost the confidence of the electors. You have it on every hand; you have it in the unions. It is no use quarrelling about the Opposition denouncing the Government at the present moment; every union in Queensland is crying out for a change. The workers are saying, "What is the use of supporting this Government?" The Government have used up every fund it is possible to put their hands on in Queensland; they have made arrangements with the Commonwealth Government whereby they have got a further large sum of money which has enabled them to carry on under certain conditions, but the day of repaying that money has got to come. Under these conditions it is lamentable that the Government, which pretends to believe in honest work, should have seen fit to continue Parliament in recess for probably a longer period than has ever been the case in Queensland politics. This year Parliament has been in recess longer than during any period since it has been my privilege to be a member of this House; that is since 1907. Here we are meeting in August—a thing that has never happened before. The financial position is lamentable, but I am not going fully into the position of the Government at this time, as I do not wish to anticipate the discussion on the motion notice of which has been given by the leader of the Opposition. It will do no good to grant this Supply to-night, as it will not relieve unemployment, and the granting of this Supply will not in any way improve the finances of the State. What we want to know is, "How soon will the Government be prepared to consider legislation which is going to make it possible for men to get employment?" Reference has been made to the Arbitration [8 p.m.] Court and the sewerage workers.

I say that there is no need for an amendment of the Act. We have a judge administering the Act, and he says, "If you men will insist on having this increased wage, it means that less men will be employed. Will you come to a decision amongst yourselves?" If the judge of the Arbitration Court has not the power to give a decision without submitting to the men's demands, it is time for an amendment of the Act. There was a quotation from "Knibbs" which appeared in the "Daily Standard," the mouthpiece of the Labour party, which showed that, at the time these statements were made by the judge of the Arbitration Court, they were claiming on "Knibbs's" figures alone that the cost of living had fallen not alone in Queensland, but also throughout the Commonwealth. That was something which the judge should have taken into consideration. It is necessary for the Government at the earliest moment so to

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amend our law in connection with indentureship that the boys of our State will have an opportunity to become useful and successful artisans.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC WORKS: There is no need to amend the Act to do that.

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: It would stagger us if we could see the statistics showing the number of boys and young men under twenty-one years of age in Queensland who to-day, unfortunately, through the Arbitration Court and our industrial conditions, have to depend on their parents for their support. There is no work offering for them, but they think too much of their position to register their names at the Labour Bureau. It would be a revelation if we could see the record of what this Government has done in the matter of unemployment of boys at the worst possible age. We want to see that a boy is started and continued at suitable employment. Once you send him from place to place to look for employment he gets into the position that he does not want work. This unemployment has been caused by the legislation which this Government is answerable for. If the majority sitting behind the Government are going to be true to the pledge which they gave to their constituents—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Have you been true to your pledge?

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: I have never broken any pledge yet. I came into the House on certain conditions, and I have satisfied my constituents. There are many men on the Government side to-night whose electors are waiting to show them that, independent of any question of pledge, they have so juggled with the work of government in Queensland that they are anxious to show them that there is no more time for them as representatives of the people of this State.

THE PREMIER: Have you not signed the Labour pledge?

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: I have not signed the Labour pledge for election to this House. I have not yet seen the man or woman who can put a question to me respecting my character in Queensland or the Commonwealth that I cannot answer.

THE PREMIER: Did you not attend a Labour conference and sign the platform to stand as a Labour candidate, and then ran as an Opposition candidate?

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: No. If I gave any attention to the matter to-night it would be only wasting time, but I am going to get in the reply to the question the hon. member has put. I tendered my resignation to the Workers' Political Organisation at Toowoomba, and told them that, if they would find a man who would stand to the pledge as they required it, I would go on his platform and help them.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

THE TREASURER: I move—

“That there be granted to His Majesty, on account of the services for the year 1921-1922, a further sum not exceeding £2,650,000 towards defraying the expenses of the various departments and services of the State.”

[*Mr. T. R. Roberts.*]

That sum really provided for two months' Supply based on the expenditure of last year. The Government proposed to give an early opportunity of letting the public know exactly how they stood in regard to loan matters, but he would postpone any announcement upon that matter until after the want of confidence motion was dealt with. He just desired, in passing, to reply to a few of the criticisms offered, and also to outline the revenue position of the Government for last year. As hon. members knew, they finished up the year with a surplus of about £9,000. They really had a surplus of about £154,000, but they used the major portion of it towards liquidating part of the old deficit of the present Opposition. As hon. members knew, the Government floated a loan in the early part of the year, which was over-subscribed, showing that the people of the State had every confidence in the Government. (Opposition laughter.) The public responded whole-heartedly and voluntarily.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Are you in favour of compulsion?

THE TREASURER: The question had been freely discussed as to which was the better method—the compulsory or the voluntarily method. The Government would be very loath to resort to compulsion; it believed in the voluntary system, but it so happened that under the voluntary system the patriotic subscriber was really the sufferer. He always subscribed while the shirker evaded his obligations. The equity of compulsion was indisputable, but they would be very loath to adopt compulsion, and he had no doubt they would get the money under the voluntary system. They hoped that the public would respond as they did to the previous loan, which was raised at a cost of 18s. 3d. per cent., the cheapest loan ever raised. Their loan expenses were heavy, but they were getting down, after superfluous items had been cut out, to a loan expenditure of about £2,000,000 a year.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What do you call “superfluous items”?

THE TREASURER: Unnecessary ones.

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: Have you spent the £3,000,000?

THE TREASURER: He presumed the hon. member referred to the rather stupid statement made by an ex-Treasurer in the morning papers a day or so ago. He had refuted his arguments in a statement which would appear the following day. They had to repay to the Bank of England by the end of next July an amount of £1,030,000, and they had falling due in January a little over £1,000,000 in Treasury bills representing deficits of past defeated Governments followed by the leader of the Opposition and the ex-leader of the Nationalist party.

MR. FLETCHER: They did not raise taxation to abnormal limits and get retrospective rents and other things like that.

THE TREASURER: But for the want of confidence motion he would devote himself for a while to the alleged arguments of the hon. member, who last session did interest them now and again, but who that night had made a speech than which he had listened to nothing more futile, and which he would call a hurricane of anathema. They had already arranged for over £400,000 of the Treasury bills and were negotiating for the balance of £700,000. The Commonwealth

Government had not yet intimated what they were prepared to allow in respect of repatriation expenditure, but they expected to get about a-quarter of a million. Apart from that, they required £3,000,000 during the financial year to fulfil their obligations to the Bank of England and to carry out what might be called their ordinary loan programme. He was quite sure that they would get it, and he would seek an early opportunity of going into the whole matter more extensively.

The hon. member for Albert abused the Government in a very unkind way for refusing money to local authorities. Of course to members who cared to think it was patent that unlimited money was not available. Last year they spent just under £700,000 on local authorities, but this year they would not get nearly that amount. He had referred the hon. member for Albert to a deputation he had introduced regarding a bridge. The member for Albert, Mr. Appel, denied introducing any such deputation. Since then he had looked up the minutes of the deputation, and there was no doubt that the hon. member did introduce it, although he might have forgotten the fact. The leader of the Opposition criticised them in respect to State stations. It would be idle to contend that their cattle stations were as valuable to-day as they were two or three or four years ago, but what had happened to the Government had happened to every individual who owned a station.

Mr. FLETCHER: Not to the same extent.

The TREASURER: No. Because the Government were bigger owners and better able to stand the burden.

Mr. FLETCHER: Because of what you paid for them.

The TREASURER: He did not think that could be substantiated. A few days after one of their deals, an offer of £20,000 on their bargain was made to them. That was in respect to a station famous in the annals of the House. No private company embarking on any big enterprise could hope to make a profit from the jump. Take a big concern like the American meat company down the river. They alleged that they had not made profits in any year. The Government had a very fine record. Take their Insurance Office or any sub-branch, their Public Curator, their bank business.

Mr. VOWLES: Take the fish business.

The TREASURER: He wished the hon. member would. (Laughter.) They could not possibly expect to make a profit out of every enterprise. Sir Joseph Cook had opposed the Commonwealth Bank, but he had been entrenched in power for the last four years, and he dared not touch one tile of the building. All the members of the National party pilloried the Labour party when they introduced the measure to establish the bank, and no one was more severe than the present member for Bulimba. The hon. member for Bulimba referred to the Savings Bank, and in a rather tortuous way, after beating around the subject a good deal, left the impression that they had no loan moneys at all, because the withdrawals exceeded the deposits. Of course that proved nothing, because the withdrawals would have exceeded the deposits if they had had the bank as a Queensland bank.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: As far as loans to local authorities are concerned, I told you you are "broke," and it is pretty certain.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Bulimba always adopted that cheerful, optimistic note. They were not "broke." He had also dealt with workers' dwellings. They were making available this financial year £500,000 for workers' dwellings and advances to settlers. They had received from the Commonwealth Bank their proportion of the excess of deposits over withdrawals, which was £150,000. On every hand the deal had been an excellent one for them.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: A very good one for immediate needs.

The TREASURER: It would not be much use arguing with an hon. member who deliberately endeavoured to lead the House to believe that the Works Department spent last month eight times the amount it spent during the same month last year.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I quoted from the "Telegraph."

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman should not put these stupid mistakes on to the Press; he should endeavour to find the correct figures. Last month they had spent £15,440, and in the previous July £15,967. The hon. member endeavoured to delude this House into the belief—purely through political malice—that they had spent over £90,000. There was no endeavour on his part to give the Government a fair deal; there was no seeking after truth: it was merely seeking to make political capital. There had been a good deal of talk about unemployment, deflation, and the like. The Country party and the Nationalists here were different to those in the South. In South Australia the Nationalist Premier (Mr. Barwell) openly said he was going to retrench; he could not find employment, and did not propose to put himself out to find it. He (the Treasurer) chose to believe that that was the policy of both parties opposite. In South Australia and Victoria the Country party were fighting the Nationalist party. In the Commonwealth Parliament they had given notice to Mr. Hughes to come back to Australia. In this House, apparently, the Country party were friendly with the Nationalist party for the time being.

Mr. FRY: Do you want to cause a split? You are not clever enough for that. (Loud laughter.)

The TREASURER: He would like to see more honest and constructive criticism; he would like some suggestion made regarding a solution of the unemployed problem. Did hon. members opposite suggest they should sack more men? At the present time they had certain moneys to pay for salaries and certain commitments in regard to material. The amount of cash at their disposal was limited. He was not one of those who was prepared to say that, when they could not find the money, they should bleed the public to feed the public service. Men could not be employed where there was not work for them to do. There had been no retrenchment. The first specific attempt at retrenchment was undertaken in cold blood at a meeting at which the hon. member for Toowoong was chairman, when they decided to send home a delegation, consisting of Philp, Cowley, and Walsh, to stop loan moneys coming here.

Mr. MAXWELL: You know that is a falsehood.

Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

The TREASURER: The hon. member knew better than he did that it was correct. J. D. Bell and G. S. Murphy moved and seconded the motion.

Mr. MAXWELL: You have to find a man who is dead to second the motion.

Mr. VOWLES: You have not said how much you paid for that information.

The TREASURER: Unpurchasable. (Laughter.) Those matters which were agitating the hon. member's mind had been discussed during the last fortnight here, when he had been endeavouring to buy some of their members—endeavouring to buy some members of the Labour party. (Loud laughter.) He knew what he was talking about. They were merely asking for two months' Supply, based on the expenditure of the last twelve months.

Mr. VOWLES: The remarks of the Treasurer had been most unbusiness-like. He had had hot criticism, with facts supported by the reports of the Auditor-General; yet he had simply skimmed them over. He (Mr. Vowles) had pointed out that the balance-sheet showed a profit of £25,000 on a capital of £1,300,000, which was bad business. He had pointed out that the Auditor-General showed that it should have been a debit balance of at least £25,000, instead of a credit balance—that the balance was obtained by inflating values of stock, and bringing about what was commonly known as a bogus balance.

The PREMIER: Why did you not discuss it last year?

Mr. VOWLES: Their criticism of State enterprises and other important departments had been stifled by an organised stonewall on the part of the Government. The Treasurer took great credit to himself that he was able to have a loan subscribed in Queensland. If the Government was not patriotic to Queensland, the people were. The public gave them an opportunity which they did not deserve. For the sake of the credit of the State, they stood behind the Government. He took it the Treasurer intended that, if they could not get the proposed further loan voluntarily, they would get it by compulsion. The Treasurer also told them there were certain moneys falling due; that he had £400,000 arranged, and was very hopeful of arranging the balance. There was also that mysterious £1,000,000 loan, which was due at any time, but they could never get any particulars about.

The PREMIER: It is not due any time. It is due on a definite date.

The TREASURER: At the end of next June.

Mr. VOWLES: That was another million they had to find. Why did not the hon. gentleman point out—as would be found at page 21 of the last Auditor-General's report—that the loans maturing in 1922 were—£600,000 at 4 per cent., £524,750 at 3½ per cent., £429,000 at 4½ per cent., and £1,275,000 at 5½ per cent.—making a total, in addition to those the Treasurer had mentioned, of £2,828,000? Why did he not tell the public about it?

The PREMIER: It is a pity you do not know more about it.

Mr. VOWLES: It was a pity they did not take the public into their confidence and be honest about those matters. The Treasurer had told them about certain loans that were falling due, but he did not tell them about the whole of them or how he proposed to

renew them or carry on. All he hoped for was to have more money to squander. They

were asked to pass a sum of [8.30 p.m.] £2,650,000 in one day, and the Standing Orders were to be suspended, in order that it might be jockeyed through and that little information and criticism could be levelled at the Government over the matter. The Treasurer said that, because there was a want of confidence motion on the business-sheet, the time was not opportune to take hon. members into his confidence and let them know the various balances. Hon. members did not know what money was available to spend. They were dealing with the revenue of the State, and the Government should be straightforward and honest about it, instead of dealing with the matter in a slipshod manner. If the directors of a company came before the shareholders with the balance-sheet in the way in they were dealing with figures here, they would get the order of the boot very quickly. The Government were the most unbusiness-like people imaginable. The Government refused to give reasonable answers to honest questions, and held back information that should have been given. He stressed the fact that the Treasurer would take the opportunity of first of all letting them know what the balances were in the various funds, in order that they might know if they had the money to pay out.

The PREMIER: He took it that the hon. member for Dalby had anticipated one of his indictments. He was now endeavouring to sidetrack, for some mysterious reason, one of the long string of indictments of which he had given notice.

Mr. VOWLES: That is not fair.

The PREMIER: What was the reason for the hon. gentleman's altered position? He gave notice on the first opportunity after the assembling of Parliament of his intention to challenge the position of the Government, and now he was lending himself to tactics which had been adopted to sidetrack that motion. The Government had been perfectly willing, from the time that it knew the intention of the leader of the Opposition, to accept the challenge and allow it to go to an issue. As a matter of fact, so certain were the Government of their position that they could sidetrack the motion, or, if need be, "gag" the motion and get it out of the way. They were perfectly willing to allow the leader of the Opposition's motion to take precedence over everything else until it was finally decided. The hon. member had lent himself to all kinds of tactics to get the motion postponed. Notice was given on Tuesday, and yet it had not been reached on Thursday.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not conduct the business of this Assembly. You do.

The PREMIER: It was evident that the leader of the Opposition did not conduct the business of his party. There was no unity of action in the Opposition; but, instead, they had a series of wild and rambling statements, none of which contained anything that could be dignified by the term of criticism. Did the hon. member really mean serious business by his want of confidence motion? He was willing to allow the motion to be decided to-night or as early as the hon. gentleman wished it to be decided.

Mr. VOWLES: If you are willing to stay all night, you can.

[Hon. J. A. Fihelly.]

The PREMIER: He was willing to have the matter decided; and if the hon. gentleman thought he was in a position to challenge the Government, let them have a decision upon it. The hon. gentleman had taken advantage of the motion to get Supply to forestall his own motion, and to bring up charges which formed part of his formidable indictment. He had mentioned the question of the maturing loans. If that was the strength of the charge which the hon. gentleman was going to make against the Government, he was sorry for the case that would be made out. The hon. gentleman had said that the Treasurer made some reference to the Treasury bills falling due in January, and asked what provision was being made to meet them. The Treasurer had stated that £2,800,000 was the total amount of indebtedness falling due for redemption in 1922. The leader of the Opposition said that the Government had apparently failed to make any provision for it and were apparently on the brink of ruin, and that the public had been misled and deceived and kept in ignorance. The fact was that the information was available, and should have been in the possession of the hon. member if he had carefully followed Government business with regard to loan and finance, especially the indebtedness of the State and the due date of loans and what provision had been made in regard to them. He could get the information from the documents in his possession. Maturing loans in 1922 were Treasury bills issued under the Act of 1911 for £600,000, and under the same Act a further parcel of £524,000; under the Loan Act of 1914, £429,000, and another amount of £1,275,000 under the same Act—making a total of £2,828,000. The two former parcels—the Treasury bills—were really renewals made in the year 1911 of an indebtedness incurred in the time of the Philip Administration. The Treasury bills were issued to liquidate a deficit. It was no obligation, liability, or responsibility of the Government except that they had to make provision because they were falling due in 1922.

Mr. KERR: We will have to do that with your deficits.

The PREMIER: He did not think they would, because, as the loans they had floated would not mature for thirty years, they would not be there when they fell due. (Laughter.) With regard to the Treasury bills falling due in January, the Treasurer had made provision for £400,000 of these bills; and with regard to the balance, negotiations were now proceeding. The £429,000 under the 1914 Act were securities held as deposits from the Life Assurance Associations, and the Act itself provided for their renewal in 1922.

Mr. VOWLES: At 4½ per cent.?

The PREMIER: At whatever rate the Government decided upon. The option rested with the Government, and they would make a fair arrangement.

Mr. VOWLES: You will make it 1 per cent.

The PREMIER: No, the Government would make a fair arrangement. The hon. gentleman would like to sidetrack the matter. The sum of £1,275,000 loaned by the Commonwealth Government would fall due in 1922, but under an arrangement a reasonable extension would be made. Full provision had been made for meeting the indebtedness of the Government. The Government had not been lacking in its responsibility in regard

to maturing loans for which previous Governments were wholly responsible and which would fall due in 1924. If the hon. gentleman's attempt to put the Government out of office rested on such flimsy grounds as the statement he made that night, then he would appear very foolish indeed. The leader of the Opposition asked a question with regard to maturing loans; but as a matter of fact both the Treasurer and himself (the Premier) made statements during last session showing how the loans were held, what they represented, and when they would mature. All that information should be in the hands of every member, and no member had a right to criticise the Government finances unless he had that information in his possession first.

Mr. VOWLES: I had the information, but I wanted to know how you were going to provide for the maturing loans.

The PREMIER: In regard to the parcel of £500,000 of life insurance deposits, the Act made provision for the renewal of that money.

Mr. VOWLES: What about the Treasury bills?

The PREMIER: Both the Treasurer and himself had pointed out previously that the £400,000 of Treasury bills held by the Savings Bank were taken over by the Commonwealth, which would make provision for them. The hon. gentleman inferred that the Government lacked ability to deal with these things, but full provision had been made by the Government to meet all maturing loans. The hon. member for Bulimba was offended with the way the Government made provision for a proper recognition of the Savings Bank and an extension of the liabilities that were resting on the Queensland Government in connection with Savings Bank deposits; but when the Government came into office they shouldered the liabilities of previous Governments, and they made provision for meeting them, although they were always being attacked by the Opposition for doing so. There were over £7,000,000 of Government Savings Bank funds invested in Government securities, and they had made provision for extending their conversion and the liability under the Savings Bank Agreement Act, and in some cases the liability was extended to fifty-five years. The Government had not been lacking in its duty in regard to maturing loan obligations. They had been looking ahead, and, although they had very great difficulties to contend with, they had managed their financial affairs satisfactorily—much more satisfactorily than previous Administrations were able to do.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The Premier tried to make them believe that the Government had done things which no previous Governments had attempted to do, but the Government stood convicted by the quotations appearing on page 21 of the Auditor-General's report. The provisions to which the Premier had drawn the attention of the leader of the Opposition were provisions that were made by the Government of which he (Mr. Barnes) was the Treasurer. (Hear, hear!) The Premier wanted to take credit to himself for the whole business. The fact remained that the Premier deliberately held back information which ought to be given to the Committee. He did not tell the Committee about the £13,000,000 falling due in 1924, and the £12,000,000 falling due in 1925. The hon.

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gentleman did not mention that the Government was "stony broke." He (Mr. Barnes) was a member of the Coorparoo Shire Council, and he knew that when they asked the Government for money they were referred to the Commonwealth Bank, and that bank also turned them down. The same thing happened with applications from the Stephens Shire and the Balmoral Shire. They knew that the amount to be lent to local authorities was smaller than last year. The Government had less money to lend, although their direct taxation was three and a-quarter times greater than under the previous Government. It was acts of repudiation by the Government that brought about the lack of confidence in the State. The Government had to realise that the British investor had got to be consulted in regard to these things. Was it possible to raise in Queensland or in Australia the millions of loan money that were maturing? He did not think it was. Some members might speak of confiscation, but he did not believe in confiscation. That was what they had to do, and they had a right to do it.

The PREMIER: You would sell our birth-right.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman talked about their birthright. That was one of the things he endeavoured to sidetrack when he came back, and his mission spelt failure, not due to the fact that Messrs. Philp and others went to the old country, but due to the fact that the Government had failed to govern along right lines. The country was right up against it, and the Government would never retrieve the position unless they did the honourable and the right thing. If any member of the Chamber, or any gentleman outside, wanted to get financial assistance, what was the position? Two men with equal assets, but one a man of character and the other a slippery fellow; who was going to get the advance? Why the man who had a good character, because character counted to-day. The simile was that the Government had lost their character. If there was a Government in Australia to-day that had dragged the country into the mire, it was the Government composed of hon. gentlemen now sitting on the Government benches. They were the ones who had contributed to the present position. Talk about unemployment!

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Rotten fish.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was jolly rotten for the poor fellows outside who had been led on by hon. members opposite, and now found themselves stranded with nothing to do. Surely the Opposition had a right to debate those matters which concerned the interests of Queensland! It was not a bit of use hon. members trying to sidetrack those matters as if they did not count. They did count, and they had to do with the very life of any Government.

The TREASURER: He would like to give the Committee some information regarding the loan money that would be available for local authorities. As hon. members knew, the year before the present Government came into power, the Government of the day was in the habit of spending over £3,000,000 per annum, and £3,000,000 then would be about equivalent to £6,000,000 to-day. The present Government could only spend £2,000,000. That was all the money they were getting,

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and each local authority would get its fair proportion; but obviously the proportion could not be greater than it was. On the other hand, under the arrangement made with the Commonwealth Bank, they would have available for trust funds 70 per cent. of the excess deposits over withdrawals.

Mr. FRY: What is that likely to be?

The TREASURER: He was not a clairvoyant, but within the last few months they had received £150,000. But they not only got that 70 per cent. to use as trust funds for workers' dwellings, advances to settlers, and so on, but they had promised to them from the governor of the bank the balance of 30 per cent.—making the full 100 per cent.—to be advanced to local authorities. Already they had succeeded in getting loans for Townsville, Brisbane, and Toowoomba, and half a dozen other local authorities. The hon. member for Albert denied point-blank that he had come to him (Mr. Fihelly) about a bridge until he produced the correspondence. His trouble with the hon. member for Bulimba was that invariably the deputations the hon. member brought along misrepresented the case; invariably their estimates were much under the actual cost, and, as a result, they had bridges half way across the streams in the hon. member's electorate. He could assure the Committee that there would be well over £500,000 available from all sources this year for local authority works.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions; and the resolutions were agreed to.

WAYS AND MEANS.

VOTE ON ACCOUNT—£2,650,000.

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

The TREASURER moved—

"(a) That, towards making good the supply granted to His Majesty on account, for the service of the year 1921-1922, a further sum not exceeding £1,600,000 be granted out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund of Queensland, exclusive of the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account.

"(b) That a further sum not exceeding £650,000 be granted from the Trust and Special Funds.

"(c) That a further sum not exceeding £400,000 be granted from the moneys standing to the credit of the Loan Fund Account."

Question put and passed.

[9 p.m.]

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported that the Committee had come to certain resolutions; and the resolutions were agreed to.

APPROPRIATION BILL, No. 1.

ALL STAGES.

A Bill, founded on the resolutions, was passed through all its stages without discussion or amendment, and ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council for their concurrence by message in the usual form.

JOINT COMMITTEES.

MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL—APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of the following message from the Legislative Council:—

“ Mr. Speaker,—
“ The Legislative Council having come to the following resolutions, viz:—

(1.) That the President, Mr. Leahy, and Mr. T. L. Jones be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Parliamentary Library;

(2.) That the President, Mr. Skirving, and Mr. Davcy be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Parliamentary Refreshment Rooms;

(3.) That the President, Mr. Perel, and Mr. Fowles be appointed members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings;

beg now to intimate the same to the Legislative Assembly, and to request that they will be pleased to nominate a like number of members from their body, with a view to give effect to the 8th Joint Standing Order.

“ TOM NEVITT,
“ Presiding Chairman.

“ Legislative Council Chamber,
“ Brisbane, 11th August, 1921.”

On the motion of the PREMIER, it was formally resolved that the following message be returned to the Legislative Council:—

“ Mr. President,—
“ In answer to the Legislative Council's message, dated 11th August, 1921, notifying the appointment of certain members to serve on Joint Committees to be appointed under Standing Orders of the two Houses, the Legislative Assembly beg to intimate that they have appointed Mr. Speaker, Mr. Dunstan, and Mr. Elphinstone to be members of the Joint Library Committee; Mr. Speaker, Mr. Corser, and Mr. Kirwan to be members of the Joint Committee for the management of the Refreshment-rooms; and Mr. Speaker, Mr. Petrie, and Mr. Payne to be members of the Joint Committee for the management and superintendence of the Parliamentary Buildings.

“ Legislative Assembly Chamber,
“ Brisbane, 11th August, 1921.”

STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

“ That the Standing Orders Committee for the present session consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. King, Mr. Swayne, Mr. Vowles, Mr. Gilday, Mr. Moore, Mr. F. A. Cooper, and the mover, with leave to sit during any adjournment of the House, and authority to confer upon subjects of mutual concernment with any Committee appointed for similar purposes by the Legislative Council.”

Mr. FRY: I called “ Not formal ” to this motion, with the object of pointing out to the Government that the National party has

no representation on this Committee; and I think that a body of men representing probably half the population of Queensland should not be ignored.

Mr. COLLINS: What! Half the population?

Mr. FRY: The latest figures show that it represents nearly three-quarters of the population. I hope that this matter will be attended to, and that a member of the National party will be put on the Committee. I suggest that the name of Mr. King, the hon. member for Logan, be added to the Committee.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: I take it that the omission possibly is an oversight on the part of the Government. The Standing Orders have to do with matters that concern all members of the House.

The PREMIER: There was not the slightest intention of discourtesy, and the omission was merely an oversight, as the names are the same as in last year's committee. I have no objection to omitting the name of my colleague, Mr. Lacombe, and inserting that of Mr. King.

Motion, by leave, amended accordingly, and put and passed.

PRINTING COMMITTEE.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS.

The PREMIER moved—

“ 1. That, in compliance with Standing Order No. 298, a Select Committee be appointed to assist Mr. Speaker in all matters which relate to the printing to be executed by order of the House, and for the purpose of selecting and arranging for printing returns and papers presented in pursuance of motions made by members.

“ 2. That such committee consist of the following members:—Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees, Mr. Barber, Mr. Dunstan, Mr. Winstanley, Mr. T. R. Roberts, Mr. Brennan, Mr. Swayne, and the mover.”

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: “ Not formal ” was called to this motion this afternoon for the purpose of reminding hon. members that last year reference was made to the fact that we had not had a meeting of the committee, and that it was thought that it should be called together more frequently. I hope that will be done.

Question put and passed.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), who was received with Opposition cheers, said: In moving the motion which appears in my name on the business-sheet, I feel sure that the people of Queensland are looking forward to an opportunity for the Opposition to present an indictment against the Government in respect of their sins of both omission and commission, and calling upon members now sitting behind the Government, more particularly those who represent country interests in Queensland, to decide whether they are going to continue them and their mischiefs in the future. I shall show at a later stage that the history of this Government has been one of retrogression and of failure—a record of broken promises made to the electors at election time. The Government appealed, in the first instance, not to the brains of the people but to their stomachs. They told

Mr. Vowles.]

them that, if they were put into power, they would be the means of solving the problem of the high cost of living. It is unnecessary for me to tell the people of Queensland how far the Government have succeeded. One has only to look up our statistics to find that Queensland has risen from one of the cheapest living States in 1914 to one of the dearest to-day, notwithstanding the fact that the Government, embarked upon ventures which were supposed to be the solution of those troubles, especially the elaborate fish shops, the meat shops, and the stations. With all that material in their hands, they have signally failed, and we have arrived at that critical stage where it is necessary to weigh their action and to decide whether they are fitted to continue to carry on the government of the country.

The motion standing in my name begins—

“That the Government does not possess the confidence of this House or of the electors of Queensland by reason of their incapacity in the conduct of public business, both legislative and administrative”——

I noticed that, when I brought this matter forward on Tuesday last, it was received with the usual jeers with which any important motion emanating from this side of the House is always greeted by certain Government members. I noticed particularly the raucous voice of the hon. member for Toowoomba, and it brought to my mind the quotation that the blatant voice always bespeaks the vacant mind.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: That quotation is not correct.

Mr. VOWLES: It may not be quite correct, nevertheless the fact remains that the practice of treating important business with jeers shows the class of representatives we have—men who are not alive to their responsibilities, and the reason why we have fallen into bad ways must be that they have no interest in their parliamentary business except their parliamentary salary. We have been told by no less a person than the Premier that “finance is the test of government.” It is on its finance that I want to deal now with this Government. The Treasurer told us that they finished the financial year with a surplus of just under £10,000, and it will be found in the Governor’s Speech—

“It is gratifying to note that the late financial year closed with a surplus of revenue over expenditure after £145,000 had been applied to the reduction of previous deficits.”

On another occasion this afternoon I pointed out that, the first time we received a Financial Statement from the Government, we were misled by being told that there was a credit balance of £30,000; whereas we found subsequently, from the criticism of the Auditor-General, that it should have been a debit balance of £100,000, because the Government had deliberately held over till July payments that should have been made by 30th June. Hon. members seem to forget what the Auditor-General stated in his report two years ago. Here is a Government telling us that they are paying back £145,000 of accumulated deficits—their own deficits for which no provision had been made.

The PREMIER: We made provision previously.

[Mr. Vowles.

Mr. VOWLES: They made no provision. They levied the money, and misapplied it. On page 2 of volume 1 of the 1919-20 Parliamentary Papers the Auditor-General deals with the alleged deficit of £171,988, which he says should have been a deficit of £485,495. He shows there that, had the Financial Statement been submitted to the public in a proper way—had the moneys which had been specifically raised for definite purposes been applied to the purposes for which they were raised—instead of the Government having a deficit of only £171,000, they would have had a deficit of £485,000. It is to pay off some of that money, which was actually received by the Treasurer and misapplied, that they take credit now that they are charging themselves with £145,000 on last year’s transactions. The Auditor-General says—

“On the 20th August, 1918, when the hon. the Treasurer submitted to Parliament his Financial Statement dealing with the finances of the State for the year 1918-19, he stated, inter alia—

Summarised, the anticipated results are—

Total revenue on account	
1918-19	£9,118,663
Total expenditure on account 1918-19	9,111,281
Surplus	£7,382”

He says further—

“Nothing has been included in the above estimate for the anticipated receipts under the retrospective clauses of the new taxation Bills.”

We in this House were asked to consent to retrospective taxation for the specific purpose of raising a portion of the sum of £450,000 for which no provision had been made, and we consented to that legislation being introduced, and to these retrospective taxes being imposed, in order that we might clean up our balances. The Auditor-General says, further, that the amount actually received was £313,507, which was made up of income tax £193,564 and land tax £119,943. He goes on to say that—

“It was not applied towards the reduction of the previous year’s deficit, but was merged into the receipts of the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the past year. Had these collections been applied in the manner indicated by the Treasurer, the deficit on last year’s transactions would have amounted to £485,495.”

The PREMIER: Let us hear the want of confidence motion.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is getting things he does not like. As I said on a previous occasion, if these things happened in ordinary business, a man would be asked to account for them in a different manner to that in which parliamentarians are asked.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have a very facile imagination.

Mr. VOWLES: A man who was a director of a company would appear in the dock if he presented a balance-sheet like that. There is nothing facile about that. It seems to me Governments can produce with impunity balance-sheets which are not correct. When the Premier was speaking on a previous occasion, he suggested to the House that I was trying to sidetrack this want of confidence

motion. The hon. gentleman consulted me as to what the procedure was going to be in this matter.

The PREMIER: I asked you did you want it taken straightaway.

Mr. VOWLES: I said, "The business of this House is in your hands. I am not running the 'show'; you are." I told you that, whether your Government was kicked out or not, the public services must be provided for, and we on this side were prepared to put through a Supply Bill. That is what the hon. gentleman calls trying to dodge this want of confidence motion. Let me tell the hon. gentleman there is going to be no evasion. This motion is going to be put to this House, and every hon. gentleman who votes on it will have to be responsible for what he does. (Government laughter.) It is no good hon. gentlemen opposite going about amongst the people at election time and telling them, "We are only moderate Labour men; we are in sympathy with the Country party's platform." They will have to stand up to their responsibilities, and they will not be able to shield themselves in the future in the way they have done in the past.

Mr. STOPFORD: You will not be able to do as you did in the Maranoa—disown the Nationalists.

Mr. VOWLES: I think there are hon. gentlemen sitting behind the Government who will disown the Government. Even the Trades Hall disowns them. We see that various unions and organisations are castigating them in every quarter. If ever a Government has outlived its usefulness—if this Government ever had any usefulness—it is the present Government.

Mr. HARTLEY interjected.

Mr. VOWLES: There is no man in this Assembly who ought to appreciate more some of the items in this indictment than the hon. gentleman who has interjected, because they seriously affect the electors in the area he is representing. The first item is:—

"Failure to carry out the functions of government and allowing committees outside Parliament, and not representative of the electors, to dictate to the Government in matters of public policy and importance."

Going right back to the advent of the Labour Government, and to the actions of a previous Premier, we claim that Parliament became—

Mr. HARTLEY: You mean the Meatworks Act, don't you?

Mr. VOWLES: I am talking about it for a start.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is nearly dead.

Mr. VOWLES: The principle is there. That was the occasion when the Premier went up and obeyed the dictation of the Trades Hall.

The PREMIER: Not the present Premier—the ex-Premier.

Mr. VOWLES: I said when the Meatworks Act was under consideration.

The PREMIER: It is this Government you are indicting at the present moment.

Mr. VOWLES: No, it is not. I am indicting you and your policy. That was the beginning of it. Ever since, we find there has been interference in every direction. We

know that in various departments, if men have a political pull, they have a better opportunity of getting their desires granted and of bettering their positions than men who have not the political pull or who do not belong to unions. That applies in the Education Department. It applies in the Police Department more than any other department at the present time. It has been the policy of this Government. Every time you hear the caucus whip crack, hon. members opposite have to do what they are told. We say it is the duty of the Government to govern; and once a Government allows any outside, irresponsible organisation to influence it to any degree at all, it has surrendered the function for which it was created, and it no longer is a suitable Government to look after the interests of the individual. The second item is—

"Failure to call Parliament together to create the necessary amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, to permit of a working agreement being made between the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, Limited, and its employees."

That raises the question immediately as to whether it is, first of all, necessary to amend that Act to bring about what is desired by the men themselves, and to follow out the suggestion of the judge.

The PREMIER: What do you suggest?

Mr. VOWLES: All I know is that the hon. member who seconded the motion for the adoption of the Address in Reply on Tuesday—the member for Mundingburra—said that the Act contains power for the Minister to suspend all the awards if he thinks fit. He was telling this Chamber—and, incidentally, the country—that if the Country party got into power the first thing they would do through their Minister would be to take advantage of section 92—I presume that was the section he was referring to—suspend all the awards, and reduce the wages; and then, he said, there would be a stampede for work. He evidently admits there are men who can get work, and who will not take it. Does that occur in Townsville, or where does it occur? Where is the place where the stampede is going to take place?

The PREMIER: What is the meaning of clause 2 in your motion?

[9.30 p.m.]

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier has told the people of Mount Morgan that the Act does not give him power.

The PREMIER: I did nothing of the sort.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman suggested that the Government could not interfere and take the matter out of the judge's hands.

The PREMIER: That is an entirely different matter.

Mr. VOWLES: The matter is of such vital importance that there are nearly 2,000 men on the unemployed market living on doles—honest men who would prefer to earn their own livelihood if the Government would exercise the powers it already has under the Act, and bring about an arrangement which the men themselves desire. Parliament should have been called together, if necessary, for the purpose of creating legislation. The Government was wanting in its

duty, and was not looking after the interests of the workers of Mount Morgan.

Mr. STOFFORD: Why did the Mount Morgan Company withdraw their application from the court?

Mr. VOWLES: The question is one for the hon. member for Mount Morgan. He sat on a rail and did not venture an opinion until he knew the result of the ballot. If there had not been any interference, which there always is in industrial matters, by the professional bullying agitators who go into these places creating dissension—if the matter had been left to the men and their own inclination—they would be at work to-day on an arrangement to suit the men and to suit the company. But now, after the work of the agitators, the men are terrorised and intimidated, and, notwithstanding they want work, they are not allowed to work. Only quite recently, where I was engaged professionally, I had an instance where a strike was taking place, and I saw what the agitator could do. I saw a lot of shearers afraid to open their mouths. I said, "Why don't you stand up for your rights?" They told me privately that, if they did, they would be black-listed and would never get another job. They would be called "scabs." They said, "We will be black-listed, and we won't be able to get work." They would be expelled from their union, like Lonsdale. Simply because Lonsdale took exception to certain autocrats in the Trades Hall in Brisbane going against the whole principles of the Labour party so far as the selection of candidates was concerned, and because he had the temerity to speak out and during the Maranoa election reiterate what he had said, now he is before the stewards and is asked to give an explanation because he persisted in telling the truth. I say it is up to the Government to say that they are the Government to rule and to give the community of Mount Morgan an opportunity to go to work.

The PREMIER: What would you do with Mount Morgan?

Mr. VOWLES: I would carry out the suggestion of the judge.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: I would allow these men to make a working agreement with the company, which would permit them to carry on and keep the men in honest employment. We are breeding a lot of professional loafers. This system of handing out money indiscriminately and encouraging people not to work is going to be the most harmful thing that can possibly happen to Queensland. The Government must realise that the writing is on the wall. If ever there was a Government that received a checkmate, it was received by the Government and their representatives who conducted the local authority elections throughout Queensland on socialistic lines. I believe something like 660 candidates against socialism were successful, and only some sixty socialistic candidates were returned. How does it happen that the western community of Queensland, in the Barcoo and the Balonne, where all these gentlemen have reigned supreme for so many years, have made a very big hole in the past majorities of the Government? We have succeeded to such an extent that we have converted a 2,000 Labour majority into a minority of 1,600 votes. How is it that where-

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ever you go amongst the workers in the West they will tell you that they have at last realised they have been living in a fool's paradise; and this Utopia which was held out to them is now turned down by the people. There are high wages, and there is no work. What is the good of having high wages when you cannot get any work? At the time when Mr. Knibbs was telling the people of Queensland that there was a decrease in the cost of living, the Mount Morgan people were asking for an increase in wages.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you say there was a 20 per cent. decrease in the living?

Mr. VOWLES: I did not say that.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Mount Morgan Company asked for a 20 per cent. reduction in wages.

Mr. VOWLES: This list is only the first chapter in the book. (Government laughter.) I come now to paragraph 5. We are told in the Governor's Speech that ". . . A commission of three trustworthy, capable, and responsible permanent officials" was appointed to remove the inequalities that have arisen in the numerical strength of several parliamentary electorates since the last redistribution of seats. That being so, I presume they are beyond the pale of criticism; and, when one comes to consider it, it is remarkable that for the purpose of creating a commission of that sort the Government had to import men from the North to do it. It would appear to me on looking at the altered boundaries—one in particular shown to me to-day in connection with Bundaberg, Wide Bay, and Burrum—that the boundaries have been deliberately altered in order to cut out what are regarded as anti-Labour votes in one district, and where another portion of the district which is recognised as a red-hot bed of Labour is shoved into the electorate.

The PREMIER: Pure imagination.

Mr. VOWLES: Then the residential portion of the Merthyr electorate was cut out and a portion which is regarded as wholly Labour has been added in order that they may regain that seat. I cannot imagine for one moment that this Commission is as impartial as it is alleged to be. It would appear to me that there has been some suggestion from some body behind them, as the whole of their faults—and there are many—err in the one direction, and that is in favour of the present Government. The Government realise that the coming party in Queensland is the Country party. That is evidenced by the votes that were received in the Maranoa. The Commission deliberately abolished three Southern electorates held by the Country party and one in the Northern part of the State. I have been told that there has been an influx of population into the city areas, and that the Commission rightly fixed those areas on a population basis in accordance with the Electoral Districts Act. I understand they did not exceed one-eighth of the actual quota in the metropolitan area. I shall probably be told that in the previous redistribution in the metropolitan area the Commission adopted one-tenth of the number, but on this occasion the Commission adopted only one-eighth. There has certainly been an influx of population into Brisbane, and lots of names are on the rolls of persons who do not exist at all. We know that during last

election a large number of persons voted who could not be found. There are a lot of fictitious names on the roll, and it is almost an impossibility for anybody to find them out. We know that when men remove from one electorate to another they do not get their names removed from the first roll when they get transferred, and it is common knowledge that an organised band of individuals vote not only once but two or three times at every election. There is no doubt there are a number of persons on the roll in Brisbane who have no right to have their names there; and, on the strength of that, Brisbane is getting greater representation than it is entitled to at the expense of the country.

The HOME SECRETARY: How it is that the local authorities have got the same names?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has put his foot into it there, because I understand that a lot of people whose names are on the municipal roll did not vote at the last election, and when they were written to they did not reply. We can only come to the conclusion that these people do not exist. The next paragraph reads—

“6. The Government's apathy towards the unemployed in Queensland, as shown by the action of the Premier in stifling discussion in Parliament when this matter was sought to be ventilated by the Opposition members during last session, and the subsequent failure of the Government to provide work for the unemployed.”

During last session it became necessary for the unemployed of Brisbane to come to me as leader of the Opposition and ask me to approach the Premier to do something to relieve the position. On a previous occasion, just before the House rose, the Premier promised me that he would do something to relieve the distress of these people; and he promised to find work by constructing a road from Brisbane to Ipswich and a road from Brisbane to Sandgate. Notwithstanding those promises, nothing eventuated. I am given to understand that the Trades Hall blocked that matter again. They objected to the men getting casual work, and said they must get permanent work or nothing.

The PREMIER: That is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier told me that the reason the work was not gone on with was because the local authority could not find the plant. Surely the local authorities could get horses and drays, wheelbarrows, and shovels.

The HOME SECRETARY: It requires more than that to make a road. What about crushing the stone and the roadmaking machines?

Mr. VOWLES: Surely these things could be obtained in Brisbane. If not, you can borrow them from the local authorities in my district. During last session I received a request from a deputation representing 2,000 unemployed. I was requested to see the Premier and ask him, for goodness' sake, to do something for the unemployed. I saw the Premier, and I told him that I was going to bring the matter forward in the House.

The PREMIER: You had no practical suggestion to make.

Mr. VOWLES: It was not a matter for me to make practical suggestions. I agree with the statement made by the late Dr. Kidston, who said that it was time enough for the doctor to prescribe when he was called

in. I moved the adjournment of the House to discuss the question of unemployed; and you, Mr. Speaker, ruled that, as we were dealing with Supply, we had an opportunity of discussing grievances, and the matter could be ventilated without adjourning the House. I had already spoken, and my deputy, the hon. member for Aubigny, rose in his place and was delivering his speech on unemployment when the champion of Labour over there stood up in his place, put on the “gag,” and closed the debate. An hon. member from the Upper House who was recently connected with an election in the West of Queensland had an opportunity of ventilating that matter in that Chamber, and he lost hundreds of votes for not doing so. I consider the Government has failed in every direction in dealing with the unemployed. Why?

Mr. GLEDSON: Because of the delegation to England.

Mr. VOWLES: It was because three men went to England—namely, the present Premier and the present Treasurer—I will not mention the third one. Why did we lose our credit, and why are we turned down for money? I will read a report of a meeting of directors of the Bank of Australasia held in London on 21st March, 1921. It was held after the delegation and after the last election, and the whole matter had dropped. This was what one of the directors, Mr. Frederick Tomkinson, said—

“I should like to ask the chairman if he can give us any satisfactory statement with regard to the affairs of Queensland, because some little time ago Queensland was acting in a way which brought discredit on that State in this country. As an old member of the Stock Exchange, we had nearly erased the name of Queensland from our list of securities. People said, ‘Do not mention Queensland,’ and that feeling shows the great disadvantage of hastily considered measures. I do not wish to use any harsh terms, but there seems to be a want of appreciation in Queensland of the sanctity of contracts entered into in the past.”

Previous to the delegation going home, certain articles appeared in the financial papers in England.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Inspired from Queensland.

Mr. VOWLES: I was charged with paying the expenses of the delegation myself. I was charged this afternoon with attempting to buy some members from the other side, but I would not take one hon. gentleman unless I got a pound of tea with him. The fact remains that they have had a warning in every quarter. They have had their little fling with the electors, and have misrepresented matters over this delegation. They have been trusted with another term of office, and, notwithstanding the loyalty of the people of Queensland in granting them another £3,000,000, they have got into the financial soup again, and are unable to get out. This is realised by every one of their supporters. As I said before, by an organised stone-wall we were precluded from discussing the question of State enterprises on the Estimates last year. We had that opportunity this afternoon, when I showed, so far as one enterprise is concerned—that is, the State stations—that it is an encumbrance on the

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people, besides interfering with the legitimate business of the people. We have £1,300,000 lying dead in that enterprise, because we received no profit out of it at all. We had a loss against it last year, according to the Auditor-General, of £25,000 on a capital of £1,300,000; whereas the Government claim that they had a profit of 1.92 per cent. on their outlay. The hon. gentlemen justified their retrospective taxation so far as the man on the land is concerned and the increased freights and fares, on the ground that the pastoral business was so profitable—that such a huge amount of money was being made out of it that the industry could stand those increases. If the industry could stand those increases, then the Government, with its large capital and the facilities which it has for carrying on its business, and the fact that it is saved certain outgoings that other businesses have to pay, should be able to show a profit of more than 1.92 per cent. The Government have been found wanting in ordinary common business capacity. Look at the State Fish Supply Department, and what do we find? We find on page 23 of the last Auditor-General's report that the balance-sheet on the 30th June, 1920, disclosed an accumulated loss on that enterprise of £15,973, and, to make matters worse, the public are not getting cheap fish. Fish is dearer than it was before the Government entered into the business. Look at the State coalmines. Look at what happened in my own electorate. Look at Warra. Look at what has happened at Baralaba. We had the same spectacle there that we are probably having to-day in Rockhampton, where we have the employees in a State enterprise on strike. This Government, which stands for conciliation, is unable to placate its own employees.

Mr. HARTLEY: They went back to work on Monday.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes; and it is quite possible they will be all out of work again on Monday next. I venture to say that, if any one of the State enterprises in Queensland, with the exception of the Insurance Department, were reported on by an independent auditor who was permitted to compute the assets and also the profits of those concerns, on the same lines as a commercial house makes up its returns, we would find every one making a loss. As far as the Fire Insurance Department is concerned, I say that the Fire Department is living on the Workers' Compensation Department in the matter of overhead expenses. The Workers' Compensation Department, being compulsory and being a monopoly, it could not help being a success; but, if you like to compare the tariff that the public have to pay, you will find in New South Wales private companies are able to compete with one another on a tariff which is better to the employer than the employer has to pay in Queensland to-day. There is only one State enterprise in Queensland to-day that has been balanced up, and that is one to which I have frequently referred, and I may refer to it again on this occasion—that is, the purchase of Mount Hutton. This property cost £73,000, and the Government had the handling of it for about four years. They had 550 calves as a gift after the original purchase was made, and had all the intermediate brandings, and at the end of the term they had 1,500 head of cattle short of the number they

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originally purchased. During one election Mr. Hunter, now Agent-General, and another hon. gentleman who was a Minister in this House, told the public of Queensland that they had made a profit of £35,000 on that Mount Hutton proposition alone. Now that the matter has been balanced up and every asset has been realised, we find, after four years of handling that property, that there is a loss of £5,900, and that loss will be increased, provided 700 head of cattle missing from the run, and which are supposed to be in some place, do not materialise. We have never been able to find them. They have not come to light yet, and, as they were purchased at £4 10s. per head, there is a further £3,000 odd to add to that loss of £5,900. That is the net result of working Mount Hutton for four years. That being so, is it any wonder that the finances of Queensland are in their present dreadful condition?

The matter of maturing loans has been sufficiently dealt with, but we have at last got information from the Government in regard to some of those items, and we have got a little more information than appears in the Auditor-General's report. The Premier has told us now that provision was made, not by him, but by somebody else, to secure the £400,000 that we already owe, in the new agreement for the taking over of the bank; but there is a sum of nearly £750,000 which the hon. gentleman is trusting to luck to get. We have to realise that he has been trying to sell debentures at 6 per cent. for a considerable time, and the public have not been very anxious to take them up. There is no rush for them, and, if there is no rush for them, there is going to be no rush for that £750,000 for which we have to pay 6 per cent.—probably more—simply because we have killed our opportunity, as long as this Government is in existence, of getting money at a reasonable rate in the old country, where we were always financed in the past.

Mr. BRENNAN: Our credit is better than the credit of any country in the world.

Mr. VOWLES: I would like to refer the hon. member again to what is stated in this paper by Mr. Frederick Tomkinson, a member of the London Stock Exchange, about Australia. If that is his opinion, it is the opinion of the London Stock Exchange, and it is not as though Queensland were the only place in existence that desired to borrow money on security. They can lend money where there are Governments that are honest, and that will not introduce legislation for the purpose of breaking contracts—immoral legislation—and Governments that will pay.

The PREMIER: What contract have we broken?

Mr. VOWLES: Is there any need for me to go over that question again, when the hon. gentleman broke leases entered into in the name of the Government, and imposed new conditions?

The PREMIER: What leases?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is trying to quibble, as he has done on other occasions, and I am not going to waste my time on that matter. That embraces No. 11.

[10 p.m.] The creation of our State enterprises—coming into competition with ordinary individuals when it suited their purpose in the markets, and forcing producers into immoral contracts, and compelling them to sell their products below

the cost of production—has been the means, more particularly in dairying districts, of keeping industries at a standstill, because the public are in a state of insecurity, never knowing what legislation will come forward from day to day. We had an hon. gentleman opposite last session introducing the application of the principles of the Industrial Arbitration Act to one of our rural industries, in connection with the Wheat Pool Act. It is staring us in the face in the Governor's Speech that there is going to be another amendment of the Industrial Arbitration Act. I know that the gentleman who contested the Maranoa recently made certain remarks in the other Chamber, the effect of which was that he hoped the time would soon arrive when all the rural industries, which at present are excluded from the ambit of the Arbitration Act, would be brought within it. If you apply the conditions of the Industrial Arbitration Act to the dairying industry, you are going to kill the only industry which, at the present time, is bringing gold from places outside Australia into Queensland to help us to pay our interest and our debts. The Government says that it is out to help the workers under the Workers' Dwelling Act; that it is going to provide returned soldiers and others with public money, in order to enable them to build homes and make improvements on their land. The timber is supposed to be cheap, and the houses to be reasonable, but here we have the Government extracting huge royalties from the timber millers, with the result that the timber at the stump is more expensive than one could buy dressed timber for his house six years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know it is absolutely untrue.

Mr. VOWLES: I know it is correct, and I challenge the hon. gentleman. Do you charge royalties according to distances?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We do not charge timber taxes or royalty in Queensland at all.

Mr. VOWLES: Then, what do you call it? Shakespeare says that "a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Whether you call it stumpage or royalty makes no difference. If you have to pay 13s. per 100 at the stump, I call it a royalty. That is put on the cost of the material to the consumer, and I am correct when I say that I bought the timber for the lining and ceiling of my house in Dalby at a less price than the miller is paying the Government for royalty to-day.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How long ago?

Mr. VOWLES: It was fourteen years ago. I remember that on one occasion, when the late Hon. T. J. Ryan issued a challenge to the Government of the day, one of the reasons he brought before the House as to why the Government should be displaced was the fact that it was extracting royalties from the public and misapplying the money; and then it was only a nominal sum compared with what it is to-day. You cannot gull the public; you cannot give men cheap houses and charge them the price you are charging for the timber. While the Government are collecting this huge sum of money and using it for their own particular purpose, building is becoming prohibitive, with the result that carpenters in particular are unable to get work. It is bad enough in the towns, but in the country there is practically no building going on anywhere. If you look

in the "Industrial Gazette" you will find that in every district there are carpenters out of work. The Government should know that the solution is to give people cheaper timber, and not to extract these royalties—to try and create building, instead of retarding it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why did the Federal Government close the timber mills down?

Mr. VOWLES: If they did close the mills down, there may be a few persons out of employment who were working in the mills; but the fact of those mills not producing sawn timber will not affect the carpenters, because there are thousands and thousands of feet of sawn timber to-day in Brisbane and in the country waiting to be sold and operated on when the cost of building becomes reasonable.

Mr. BRENNAN: Are there no private timber firms?

Mr. VOWLES: There are timber firms which are making huge fortunes; they obtained timber concessions when royalties were very small; but the institution which is making fortunes for these people is the Government, who are charging royalties in some cases six times, or 600 per cent., over what a man purchased his timber for previously, and allowing him to make the difference in his profit on his timber from the mill. The particular men the hon. member is referring to would not get those profits. The Government may have made a mistake in regard to the price they arranged; but, if a man has got the concession at 2s. 6d. per 100 feet, and you fix it at 12s. 6d., you immediately place 10s. per 100 feet in his pocket, and make a rich man of him at the expense of those who want houses. I say you should charge a man a fair royalty; he will make some profit; but not the huge profit the Government is putting in his pocket to-day.

I would now refer to the action of the Government in its encouragement of indiscriminate gambling. I do not want to be a hypocrite. I go to the racecourse, but I would not permit gambling anywhere except on a registered racecourse. We have seen the Government giving permits to certain individuals to carry on gambling that the ordinary spicler would be put in gaol for doing, and the proceeds of that vice are used in order to help to keep hon. gentlemen opposite in their snug billets and to pay their expenses at election time. I am told my time is up. I sincerely trust that hon. members opposite will give every consideration to the matters I have placed before them. I ask them to realise that the time is ripe for a change. We do not want hon. members opposite living behind a cloak, and pretending to their electors that they are in sympathy with us, unless they do the practical thing and come over here and support us, sit with us, and sign our platform, and get rid of the incubus of the present Government, which has brought Queensland to such a bad state, and which will cripple her altogether unless the Government is got rid of.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I rise to second the motion so ably moved by the leader of the Opposition, and in doing so I want to say that I feel sure hon. members will realise their duty to their country and their electorates, and will allow their own consciences to be their masters, and for once rise above

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those ties of party which, on other occasions, make them vote against the dictates of their consciences and the interests of the State. The Country party is not launching this motion from any party point of view. It is doing it absolutely in the interests of the taxpayer and the country. It is not so many years since the present Premier assisted to launch a vote of censure against the previous Government on the grounds, amongst others, of the Government's

"Tampering with electoral laws for party purposes, failure to produce a sound policy of railway construction, bad management of railways, failure to provide for maturing loans,"

and said that the Government were deserving of the severest censure, as not being faithful to their promises. On this occasion, I think you will agree, all sections of the people express no confidence in this Government, while we had from their own organisations indications of their disgust with the present Administration. The Auditor-General's report has produced most damaging evidence of the Government's incapacity fairly to conduct the business of the country, and, if any further evidence be needed, it may be found in the daily Press reports of speeches in Brisbane and every country town by unemployed who want some kind of work and are offered only a pittance. The Government have done everything that is possible to kill the incentive to work and destroy the reward of thrift, to cripple production, to kill our industries and kill the State. If we want to build up a good State of Queensland, we must not allow a bad Government of Queensland to hinder us. It is not that the country is not good enough, but that the Government is too politically rotten to enable us to develop as we should.

I find from a Press clipping that the hon. member for Maryborough, in addressing 100 unemployed assembled at Queen's Park at Maryborough, certainly told the truth. He said—

"It was no use his going there to pull their legs. The finances of the Government had got them absolutely strangled."

(Laughter.) Is that not evidence of want of confidence by one of their own members, and certainly a fairly extreme one? Then I have another cutting—

"A deputation representing the unemployed section of the Australian Workers' Union was introduced to the Home Secretary (Mr. McCormack) on Friday by Mr. D. Riordan, M.L.A. At a meeting of the unemployed section later in the day the deputation reported that it had been received very discourteously. Mr. McCormack had been 'very abusive' and had accused, not only them, but Mr. Riordan also of seeking to make political capital out of the unemployment situation. They had got no satisfaction whatever from Mr. McCormack."

They got no satisfaction from the Government, and the meeting passed a resolution of protest, and determined to circulate it throughout the hon. member's electorate. We also find that the Metropolitan District Labour Council passed a motion to the effect that unless the Labour Government were prepared to adhere to its principles—the principles embodied in the Labour platform—it would be better that it should resign office. Thus, in their own institutions, amongst their own individual supporters, they found

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evidence of lack of confidence. Large meetings have been held in all parts of Queensland and disgust expressed at the Government's programme, and also sympathy for the unemployed, who were the victims of the class legislation which they had passed. When the Government took office and introduced their class legislation, the Opposition told them it would bring about a dearth of employment, a smaller number of persons receiving greater amounts and a great number of persons receiving nothing; and their predictions had been fulfilled. The Government complain that they have not the necessary money, but, from the remarks of the leader of the Opposition, it is evident that the Government have received and expended much more than any other Government ever hoped to have. They have spent £57,000,000 of revenue and £15,000,000 of loan money. Where has it gone to? We have in certain districts increased our Savings Bank deposits. The policies of this and past Governments have meant that from 1909 to 1920 the Savings Bank deposits have increased from £5,600,000 to £17,000,000.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are you blaming us for that?

Mr. CORSER: I am blaming past Governments, and more particularly this Government. They spend loan money and complain because they cannot get all they want. In 1915, when they were making their first successful appeal to the people, they had printed at "The Worker" office the little "red book" of what the Labour policy really meant.

The HOME SECRETARY: That is not red; it is pink.

Mr. CORSER: It has faded, like your policy. (Laughter.) This is what the "red book" has to say—

"The Labour party demands that this state of affairs shall cease. It demands that definite measures shall be taken to wipe out loans as they mature, instead of following the fatal course of contracting new debts in order to pay off old ones, and continuing the payment of interest year after year without in any way reducing the principal owing."

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

The Government claimed that the people of Queensland stopped them getting money on the other side; yet they successfully and without compulsion, secured the greater portion of £2,000,000 in Queensland, and they have squandered that with the rest.

The PREMIER: Finance does not seem to be your strong point.

Mr. CORSER: It is the hon. gentleman's strong point—he seems to have done very well by it. The policy of spending loan money is a good one, despite what the Labour party used to say; but loan money must be spent not alone with the idea of securing the interest from the concern on which the money is spent but to encourage the development of secondary industries where those productive works have been carried out.

Mr. COLLINS: You tried to block the iron and steel works at Bowen.

Mr. CORSER: That is another picture the Government held up. They also were going to have coal mines. They had one in the Dalby district. It was closed so far as the production of coal was concerned, but during the drought the farmers watered their cattle on it. There were iron and steel works, coal mines, fish shops, and State stations. When we refer to the arsenic, as the Home Secretary would like us to do. He ought to be ashamed to mention arsenic in this House again. Before this House adjourned last year I charged the Government with selling to primary producers for clearing prickly-pear arsenic which analysed only 19 per cent. The Home Secretary dealt with me practically as a criminal. He appealed to the House to say what they thought of a man who sent down a stone and said it was Government arsenic. The Premier did not let me down any lighter. They endeavoured by every means in their power to bring me to earth. They sent the police up from Mount Perry to seize this arsenic. They sealed it up and brought it to Brisbane under police escort. I notice it was very carefully stated who were present at the opening of this arsenic which was to seal my future fate in Parliament—

"Yesterday the seal was broken by the Assistant Government Analyst in the presence of the Minister for Mines (Mr. Jones), the Home Secretary (Mr. McCormack), the Police Commissioner (Mr. Short), and representatives of the Press."

Certain apologies for absence, I believe, were received. (Laughter.)

The HOME SECRETARY: One from you. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: I was the only one who was not asked to be present. The individual for whom I was making the appeal first wrote to the Government and complained of the arsenic, and the reply he received was that this arsenic would go 85 per cent. or 90 per cent. Instead of its going 19 per cent., as I stated, and as is shown in this certificate, the first sample went 14 per cent. To try and defend themselves, the Government went to the biggest institutions in Brisbane to whom they had supplied arsenic, and got certificates that the arsenic supplied to them had gone 91 per cent., 92 per cent., and 93 per cent. That was true, showing that to the bigger merchants they were selling that arsenic, and to the farmer they sold 14 per cent. arsenic. (Laughter.) This individual in the country spent £30 or £40 spraying with a man he had to hire. The Government told him he must clean the pear from his land. He found he was only watering it; the pear enjoyed it. Fortunately, we are not bound and tied to the Government, and we are able to voice the sentiments of our electors. When this Government came into power the Queensland railways were paying £4 5s. 7d. per cent. To-day they are paying 15s. 5d. per cent. What is more; on three occasions the Government have increased the freights and fares to try and cover up the maladministration of the department. Even so, on the second last occasion there was a deficit of £1 500,000. Yet just before the elections of 1915, when they were asking for the confidence of the people, this is the motion they moved—

"That in the opinion of this House the freight charges on the Queensland Government railways are excessive and

require readjusting on long-distance routes with a view to a general reduction, for the following reasons:—

They are inimical to the best interests of the man on the land:

They retard closer settlement in the interior, and are a serious handicap to that developmental work so essential to the progress and prosperity of the State."

These statements are quite true, and I use them against the Government in support of the non-confidence motion that the leader of the Opposition has been good enough to launch this evening.

The HOME SECRETARY: You voted against that.

Mr. CORSER: I have never yet opposed a motion like that. The net revenue produced by this Government per individual employed in the Railway Department in 1914 was £102, and in 1919 the amount was £17 per head—due to the mismanagement and the lack of control on the part of the Government.

The PREMIER: That is a deliberate falsehood.

Mr. CORSER: They are your own figures; so they may be false. The Premier is not going to misrepresent my statement. In 1914 the revenue produced per man on the railways was £102, and in 1919 it was only £17 per man.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you want the fares raised to make it up?

Mr. CORSER: You have raised the fares quite enough. We want better administration—fairness and honesty. We want confidence from the people in the Administration; and we do not want the continuation of the maladministration, and the class-conscious administration that we have had during the last few years. They not only tax but they aggravate everybody who tries to do something for himself. They have hampered existing industries, and prevented new ones coming into existence. I have plenty of proof of that.

The HOME SECRETARY: You went outside when that motion was put.

Mr. CORSER: I challenge the hon. gentleman again to show that in "Hansard." That is absolutely untrue. Be a man and apologise.

The HOME SECRETARY: You did not vote for it.

Mr. CORSER: By their land policy they have displeased the man who has to go out and make his living on the land and develop the State. Their policy of perpetual lease is a policy dictated to them by the power behind the throne—the big-wigs in the Trades Hall. The Trades Hall officials are responsible for the policy of the Government, and that is why the people's confidence has been shaken, because the people who go out into the bush cannot have the freehold of their land. I want to show the non-confidence of the country people in this legislation. A Workers' Political Organisation wrote to me, and asked me to advocate perpetual leases in the opening of some land round Mount Perry, and I was able to reply that these lands would be open either for perpetual lease or freehold tenure. When the Land Court was over, I was surprised to find that no applications were made for perpetual leases. We have got to-day conditions in the country which are not acceptable to the country

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people. The perpetual lease system is dictated by men who have not to go out on the land, but who get their bread and butter easier than that, and yet will not let the country man say what his conditions of employment shall be. The soldiers' settlement is another reason for non-confidence in the Government. The soldier settler to-day has to live under more severe conditions than the ordinary settler. He has to reside on his land for ten years, and cannot dispose of it before then, except to another returned soldier; whereas an ordinary individual who did not go to the war can transfer after five years to whom he likes. These matters were pointed out to the Government when the Bill was going through, and we on this side moved amendments to try and rectify the anomalies in the interests of our soldiers; but the Government, by the force of weight of numbers, were able to defeat our amendments. The soldier to-day is a victim of those conditions, brought about by the Government who have lost the confidence of the country right throughout. It is a fine thing to have the opportunity of launching a protest against them.

I have given some instances where the Trades Hall and workers' political organisations have passed resolutions against the Government. If there is one part of the Government policy on which they stand condemned, and on which they have lost confidence, it is on their public works policy, particularly in the country districts. Anyone going into the country districts will find the open-air schools with the blinds in a dilapidated condition. In some cases you can poke your hand through them, and I know one teacher who was asked to sew them up. The public works policy of the Government is not carried out as it should be. We have got instances in their own ranks where they show a want of confidence in the Government. I can quote from the letter of one of their Trades Hall friends in Maryborough, an ex-president of the Maryborough Workers' Political Organisation, Mr. Joseph E. Vance, junr. Mr. Vance, in a letter to the "Maryborough Chronicle," said that he noticed from the "Standard" newspaper that a jibe had been given to the member for Burnett when he asked certain questions regarding certain public expenditure. This is what Mr. Vance says in his letter—

"Sir,—For several years I have worked as a carpenter in the Works Department Construction Branch. This is run under the so-called day-labour system. I might here say that the day labour appealed to me as right. Let me add, this so-called day-labour system in operation is anything but right. I may have come into conflict time and again with the officials. At one time I demanded a public inquiry. Instead they sent up a departmental official, who told me that he was given instructions to inquire into any work then in progress, but that he was not under any circumstances whatever, to inquire into any work that was finished. It seems practically hopeless, where officials protect each other in this manner, to straighten the whole wretched business. However, I wish to refer to the latest exploit of this precious Works Department. The member for Burnett, B. H. Corser, for reasons of his own, moved for a return concerning improvements to the South Gayndah State

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School, also the removal of residence from Sunbury to South Gayndah School. The answer is an example of the honesty (?) of the department. The first section of the work was bungled badly. I was requested to take charge of the job, and, if possible, pull the whole business out of the mud. I was shown an official document, which stated that the first section was then largely exceeded. The section was even then far from complete. In spite of all this, the Works Department now state the first section was done under estimate. In future I shall know what value to place on statements of the Works Department, and remember the old adage that 'figures can't lie, but liars can figure.'"

(Opposition laughter.) There is a proof that their own supporters have no confidence in them. I know that the Government are particularly anxious to reply to the statements of the leader of the Opposition. If members opposite will only vote as their conscience dictates, then those statements that have been made are worthy of their consideration and support. I have every confidence that we will secure some encouragement, and this motion will give us an opportunity of seeing whether it is possible in this House to break party ties. Mr. Higgs has been driven from the Labour party, and the time has arrived in Queensland for members of the Government party to express themselves freely and honestly.

The PREMIER: It is quite evident that the leader of the Country party has no kind of expectation that his motion will be carried. The tactics adopted by him in bringing the motion before the House are sufficient indication of that. He could have found a more complete and effective manner of testing the confidence of the House in the Government by following the usual practice of moving an amendment to the Address in Reply.

Mr. VOWLES: That is not the usual practice. Look up the records.

The PREMIER: That was the only logical practical course to adopt to see if the Government had lost the confidence of the House. It would have given members an opportunity of seeing what the Government's sessional programme was, but the hon. member evidently framed his motion before even hearing the Governor's Speech. The hon. gentleman's arguments were poverty-stricken, and he had to rely on many stale matters dealt with two, three, and four years ago. The hon. member's speech was founded on matters that have been debated ad nauseam in this Chamber for the last five or six years.

Mr. VOWLES: You cannot reply to taem

The PREMIER: I am going to reply to them, and there is a very effective reply to the futile string of objections that the hon. member has levelled against the Government. The hon. member has absolutely no kind of expectation that this motion will meet with success, and I am going to show why that is so. After the hon. member gave notice of the motion, so little notice did his own supporters take of it, and so little expectation had they that it would be carried, that they immediately gave notice of questions to Ministers that they knew could not be answered until this motion had been defeated.

They continued to debate various other subjects raised in the Chamber without any regard to the hon. member's feelings for his own motion of want of confidence, which should have, if he had any proper belief that the thing would be taken seriously by the House, been pressed on and dealt with. Not only that, but prominent members of his own party have to-day made requests to Ministers to see deputations of their constituents.

Mr. VOWLES: Did you receive them?

The PREMIER: No; I took the correct view that I will not receive deputations upon subjects which are dealt with in this motion of want of confidence until the motion itself is dealt with by the House.

Mr. CORSER: Any chance to inconvenience country people who come down here on deputations!

The PREMIER: The hon. member may be able to gather comfort from that kind of utterance, but let me give him a further example of their lack of experience or utter futility in this matter. Certain members of the Country party have approached Ministers since notice of this motion was given and asked Ministers to attend their constituencies in the country two months hence to open shows. (Government laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: Name them.

The PREMIER: I would not be so unkind, not publicly at any rate, as to name them, but I will give the hon. member the names. The hon. member was good enough to deal seriatim with this long and not very formidable indictment. I do not know whether he was the draftsman of the motion or not. I do not want to be too critical about the language employed or the manner in which it is put together, but let us deal with the motion in the way he did.

No. 1—

“Failure to carry out the functions of government and allowing committees outside Parliament, and not representative of the electors, to dictate to the Government in matters of public policy and importance.”

There is a beautifully vague charge upon which to challenge a Government! What kind of evidence does he bring forward? He made some kind of reference to an indefinite happening in 1915, I think he said—something that is alleged to have happened because one of my early colleagues in the present Administration attended a meeting at the Trades Hall. That is supposed to be an evidence of dictation by outside committees—some kind of noxious, extraneous influence on this Administration in this late hour of our experience, and after two elections have been fought and won by the Government in the meantime.

No. 2—

“Failure to call Parliament together to create the necessary amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, to permit a working arrangement being made between the Mount Morgan Gold-mining Company, Limited, and its employees.”

The hon. member apparently recognised the thin ice he was skating on in dealing with that question, and carefully evaded the challenge from this side as to what his own policy would be in regard to Mount Morgan.

Mr. VOWLES: I said you were Premier.

The PREMIER: Yes, and I have not hesitated in saying what I believe should be the solution of the Mount Morgan trouble. From the commencement of the difficulty at Mount Morgan I used all my efforts to bring about a solution of the difficulty there to enable the operations to be continued. Realising how serious a matter it was for so large an undertaking to be suspended, I brought the parties together on more than one occasion, and I was publicly thanked by the representatives of the company—Mr. Kelso King, chairman of directors, and Mr. Boyd, the general manager—on the one side, and by the unions on the other, for my intervention in the matter. Unhappily, I was unable to get the parties absolutely to settle the terms on which a resumption of work could take place. That was not because of any defect or shortcoming on the part of the Government. I firmly believed most of what the company said, if not the whole of what they said, in regard to the losses that were being incurred, and their general statement that they could not work under the present condition of the metal market without loss. I believed that to be the fact, and I believed their offer to be bona fide, and I advised the employees to endeavour to come to some arrangement, even if it meant some scheme of deferred payment or the adoption of some kind of sliding scale. I thought that would be the solution of the difficulty. At the same time I admitted and stated candidly that the problem was one for the employees to solve in conjunction with the employers. The matter, at any rate, was not prejudiced, as the hon. member stated, by the sending to Mount Morgan from Brisbane or elsewhere of what he terms paid agitators to prevent a settlement. That statement is a mere begging of the question on the part of the Opposition. The employees themselves and their own elected officials and controlled officers in Mount Morgan decided the question; and to level a charge against the Government that we have failed in our duty because we did not call Parliament together to amend the Arbitration Act simply indicates on the part of the leader of the Opposition a woeful lack of a knowledge of the situation. It appears to me that the hon. member wanted Parliament to be called together to suspend or to amend out of all recognition the Arbitration Act. Apparently he wants to bring about the wholesale destruction of wages awards; apparently he wants to undermine the wages system of Queensland, and take away by drastic class legislation what the workers have won in the last five years. Apparently, because there are in Queensland some industries which are carrying on under difficulties, which fact we all recognise, he wants to impose the whole burden on the workers, and to amend their wages and take away their privileges, increase the hours, and do what his colleagues in South Australia are doing—attempt to destroy the advantages which the workers have gained in recent years.

Mr. VOWLES: Look at our programme.

The PREMIER: I have looked at your programme. The next paragraph says—

“That the Government does not represent a majority of the electors of Queensland.”

I am not going to try to camouflage the position—as a matter of fact, members on this side are accustomed to stand up to facts

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and look them in the face—I am not going to contend that at the last State elections a majority of the electors voted for this party. Unfortunately for them, and unfortunately, perhaps, for us, they did not; but there were more electors who voted for this party than there were electors who voted for any other party in Queensland. What have hon. members to say about that? There were recorded for the endorsed Labour candidates—there can be no equivocation about the votes cast for them—168,000 votes in round figures. There were cast for the National party 77,000 votes, and for the leader of the Opposition's party—the Country party—54,000 votes. The hon. member is

[11 p.m.] challenging the Government and wants to replace them, and one of the grounds on which he challenges the Government is that they do not represent the electors. We represent more than three times the voters that the hon. gentleman's party represents. The hon. member has the insufferable impertinence to want to come here and occupy these benches on the ground that we have lost the confidence of the electors. Look at the grounds on which the hon. gentleman would displace the Government. He gives the result of the recent local authorities elections as a ground for turning the Government out of office. I do not know why the hon. gentleman did not refer to the recent hospital election in Cunnamulla where a Government candidate was defeated, or to a local dog show at Camoowal or somewhere else where a Government candidate was defeated. Why not register that as an evidence of want of confidence in the Government and demand our resignation? This Government represents a majority of the constituencies in Queensland, and while we continue to do that we are going to continue in office and administer the affairs of this State.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: If you are lucky.

The PREMIER: The hon. member suggests if we are lucky. No, we can do that if we are true to our pledges. (Opposition laughter.) Hon. members opposite, I am told rather authoritatively, have been casting around and attempting to buy members of the Labour party, but they have not succeeded. The hon. gentleman spoke most contemptuously to-night, and said that he would not have any members from this side, even if they were given to him. They are not likely to be given to him. The Labour party is not a party which trims its sails to every passing breeze; it is elected upon a well-established and well-defined platform. We have well-recognised and well-established principles, and we are going to stick to them and advocate them. If we are defeated by the electors in the process we will accept our defeat, but while we continue to represent a majority of the constituencies we will stop here, and hon. members opposite will have to be content to squeal from that side of the House, to show their lack of knowledge of finance, and to give pitiable exhibitions such as the seconder of this motion gave in the course of a rather lengthy speech. The hon. member also drags in a reference to the Maranoa by-election. The same thing applies there. A decision in a Federal election might be a justification, in the hon. member's mind, for turning a State Government out of office, but in no one else's mind. I do not know whether the hon. member will suggest that the British Govern-

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ment, which represents a vast majority of the constituents in the House of Commons, should give up office because it was defeated in a by-election. One of the grounds for the suggested dismissal of the Government is that the Government has used the Electoral Districts Act of 1910 for party purposes and has created new boundaries in order to strengthen its position. That is the most remarkable indictment of the whole lot. The hon. member and his party in every session during the last four years—and it applies to the Nationalist party also—have, with tedious repetition, charged the Government with carelessness and neglect of duty in not having had a redistribution of seats. There would have been a redistribution in the last Parliament; but an account of manipulations, more or less successful, of the Nationalists and others in bringing about a boycott in London, they precipitated an election in Queensland. (Opposition laughter.) At any rate, there was no time to have a redistribution; but when we got over the election, at the first opportunity a redistribution was undertaken. They criticised the Government for not moving under the Act of 1910. The late Home Secretary, the hon. member for Albert, suggested that there was no necessity to get legislation through, as we had all the legislative machinery, and all that was necessary to do was to appoint a Commission. We have acted on that suggestion, and a Commission has been appointed. When the Commission was appointed the names were announced, and they were received with unanimous approval. The "Brisbane Courier," which never misses an opportunity of criticising the Government, could find no complaint with the constitution of the Commission. The "Daily Mail" and every other newspaper all publicly stated that the gentlemen selected were men of high probity and considerable experience, and men in whom everyone could have confidence. The Commission had a difficult task because of the slipshod nature of the old Act, which was passed by a previous Administration, and not by us, but they did their work faithfully and well. They consulted the various interests.

Mr. MACGREGOR interjected.

The PREMIER: They did not consult the Government. The hon. member apparently has been very displeased with what we have been doing this session. I have watched him, and noticed that he has been unable to raise a smile. Now that I am dealing with something which seems to interest the hon. gentleman especially, he seems to be galvanised into life.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Tell us what instructions were given to the Commission.

The PREMIER: No instructions were given to the Commission. That is a most cowardly attack to make on the Commission. I think it was beneath the leader of the Opposition to descend to the tactics he did to-night in making the reflections he made. It was a gross calumny on men who cannot reply to those reflections. Look at the electoral map and examine the districts, and you will find that the Commission did its work well in the interests of the whole State, and absolutely without regard to party interests whatever.

Mr FOWLES: I do not agree with that.

The PREMIER: Hon. members opposite in 1911 had a redistribution in hand, and what kind of gerrymandering did they indulge in? And the hon. member now has the infernal cheek to talk about gerrymandering! The hon. member and other hon. members benefited by the deliberately arranged political redistribution of that year. Prior to that there were, I think, eight double electorates in Queensland, and they so arranged matters, and the Commission was so selected, as to make of each one safe Nationalist seat and one Labour seat. There was no complaint from the Labour party. We put up with it because we knew that it was inevitable.

Mr. COSSER: You got a two to one majority on that same redistribution.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is either very short of memory or is deliberately mishandling the truth. The redistribution was in 1911 and the election in 1912, and we lost it. The hon. member says that the Country party has been made to suffer. That may be the unhappy result. It certainly was not the desire of this party to compel country constituencies to suffer, whether represented by members of this party or that, but we had to take the machinery provided by the Act, and unhappily—I say it quite candidly—such a redistribution was bound to give the metropolis and other large cities additional representation. The North, fortunately, just held its proportion and we retained our sixteen seats—only sixteen seats for a very important division of the State. I deplore the necessity to adhere to a quota—provided not by ourselves but by our predecessors—which gives to the metropolis more representation. I do not know whether hon. members suggest that the quota for city electorates should be twice that for country electorates, but we had to have some kind of approach to the principle of “one vote, one value.”

Mr. BEBBINGTON: In some cases you make the country seats larger than the city seats.

The PREMIER: No. You will find that there was a more liberal application of the quota under this scheme in favour of the country than under the previous scheme. (Opposition dissent.) At any rate, that can be discussed at greater length later on. What I want to point out is that it is ridiculous and absolutely absurd to charge the Government with deliberate gerrymandering of boundaries.

The next charge is that of alleged “apathy towards unemployment, as shown by the Premier’s stifling of discussion,” as the leader of the Opposition puts it. There is not a single scintilla of justification for that charge. To charge a Government with such apathy is simply playing with words and sending up fireworks. If there is any apathy towards the unemployed or the “bottom dog,” it comes from the other side of the House. I acknowledge that there are unemployed, and I acknowledge the extreme difficulty of solving the problem. Unfortunately, the Labour party’s policy has not had the chance that the policies of other parties have had. We have had only about eighteen months’ power since we got control of the Council, and that period coincides with the financial depression and the absolute boycott of the Government in respect to money, which prevents our doing what otherwise we might have done. What does Mr. Barwell, the leader of the anti-Labour forces in South Australia, say?

Does not his policy coincide in every particular with that of the leader of the Opposition?

Mr. COSSER: No.

The PREMIER: I know that during the last eighteen months there has been a wonderful change in the politics of the leader of the Opposition and the hon. member for Burnett. Till then they were staunch Nationalists; now they have relegated the Nationalists to the cross benches while they sit in smug contentment immediately opposite the Government. At any rate, on this question they represent the views of all anti-Labour politicians, and I shall read what Mr. Barwell said—

“Last week a deputation of the Port Adelaide unemployed was told by the Premier that so far from the Government providing work it was going to discharge hands, and that wages must be reduced before the unemployment evil could be cured.”

In times of difficulty and temporary depression the worker must suffer and be cast into unemployment, and the unemployed army, according to the doctrine of hon. members, is necessary in order to destroy the benefits to Labour. Let me give you a wiser view than that—a quotation from the Brisbane “Telegraph.” I do not mean that it is a Labour paper, but at times it publishes very wise articles.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: By mistake?

The PREMIER: No. I think it is because at times it does not set out to gain political advantage, and at such times it indulges in some very wise comments and observations. It says—

“The shadow of distress lies upon all the capital cities in Australia this winter. Those who would like to trace all their woes to the persons who misgovern them will not derive comfort from the knowledge that unemployment seems to be as bad in Melbourne as in Sydney, though the party complexion, both of the State and the Federal Government in the former, is very different from that of the State Government in the latter. The fact is that the world-wide causes which are operating against the sale at their former prices of our primary products are also operating to limit employment and to reduce wages throughout this country.”

That is a wise summing up of the difficulty. It is a broader recognition of the problem than the narrow pettifogging party attitude adopted by the leaders of the Opposition here.

Then the hon. member goes on to quote the “mismanagement and huge losses incurred by State enterprises,” and, although I listened most carefully, I could hear nothing to justify his charge in the least degree. He certainly made some reference to a State station—in 1916, was it not?

Mr. VOWLES: The only one that had been cleaned up.

The PREMIER: Well, the hon. member ought to be satisfied. Later on, when we get the report of the Commissioner of State Enterprises and the Auditor-General, we can go more fully into that. It is no use the hon. member indulging in vague generalities, as the hon. member for Port Curtis did—guessing at what the situation is going to be, and when he is challenged to produce

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some proof, saying he was told by someone, or he was up in the district some years ago and knows such and such a property could have been bought for something less. That is characteristic of the puerile opposition which the Government is subjected to at the present time.

The hon. member goes on to refer to the failure of the Government to provide for maturing loans. The hon. member is not aware of the situation in the least degree.

Mr. VOWLES: You have told me only what I have previously told the Chamber.

The PREMIER: The Treasurer had referred to £2400,000 which had been provided for, and the hon. member made the deliberate statement that we had made no provision whatever with regard to the balance of £2,800,000.

Mr. VOWLES: I said no particulars had been given.

The PREMIER: If the hon. member had been fully aware of how that indebtedness was incurred he would have known that automatically provision is made for a large parcel of it; that, with regard to a large parcel, it is held as securities for the life insurance companies; and he would know the conditions with regard to the Commonwealth loan and the agreement of 1915. The hon. member refers also to the failure to legislate effectively to properly protect the interests of the primary producers, but that question he skipped over. I wanted to hear what the charge was.

Mr. VOWLES: You will hear plenty from other members.

The PREMIER: Perhaps when those hon. members come along we will have something to answer. The hon. member mentions "failure to encourage or to supply the necessary funds for the development of secondary industries." That is one of the most remarkable of the charges. The hon. member has been referring to extravagant expenditure, increasing expenditure, in the various offices. There is no reference whatever to economy in the resolution—no indication of a desire for economy; and there are specific references to a condemnation of the Government for not incurring more expenditure. One of the principal charges on the Financial Statement was that we were extravagant and lavish with loan expenditure as well as Trust Funds. Now he wants us to spend more. I am not saying it may not have been a good thing to incur additional expenditure on the development of secondary industries. Can the hon. member indicate the particular direction in which we can incur this expenditure?

Mr. VOWLES: Co-operative agricultural production.

The PREMIER: We amended the Act, provided a scheme and advanced money under it. Many hon. members on the other side are recent comers to the Chamber, it is true. It might, perhaps, have been better if they had come earlier. But their predecessors in the same party stood for years behind a Nationalist Administration in this Chamber, in times when money was plentiful, when it was easy to get funds; and in those days what did they do for the secondary industries? They did nothing for the primary, the secondary, or any other kind of industry except private enterprise.

The hon. member calls attention to the

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

fact that the Government are creating legislation that has been destructive of public credit. This is a charge they find so useful to have for political purposes, because it so admirably suits the hoodlers, the capitalistic class, and especially the Press representing those interests; and they use it all over the State in an endeavour to damage politically this Government. What does it mean, boiled down into plain English? The hon. member is condemning this Government for passing the Land Act Amendment Act of 1920. He condemns this Government for making the squatter pay the same rent the farmers have to pay. He is supposed to be the leader of a Farmers' party; yet he condemns this Government because we ask the pastoralist, the large landholder, the absentee landholder of Queensland, to pay the same rent per square mile that the farmers have to pay! Previous Nationalist Administrations in Queensland have passed legislation and made grazing farmers pay more than their leases provided for. On a certain occasion a previous Nationalist Government amended the Land Acts, and made the grazing farmers, who were subject to a 50 per cent. limitation, pay more than the 50 per cent. limitation provided for, and there was no cry of repudiation, no cry of confiscation, or breaking of contracts. But when this Government, in order to get a just deal for the people of Queensland and equality of treatment between the selectors and pastoralists, made provision to terminate that concession, which should never have been granted, and make the pastoralist pay the same rent as the grazing farmer had to pay, from the alleged Farmers' party there was a cry of repudiation. The leader of the Opposition stated deliberately that we had broken a solemn undertaking—that we had departed from a contract; and he made the specific reference that we had broken the terms of a lease. The hon. member has never been able to prove that, nor has anyone else in Queensland. I have challenged them to prove that we have deliberately broken any agreement, or departed from the conditions of any contract or disregarded the conditions, and they have not been able to do that. But they keep on reiterating this charge of repudiation. They, by their reiteration or by their circulation of that charge, are doing irreparable injury to Queensland and destroying the credit of Queensland. To put it plainly, it is not Government repudiation that has caused Queensland to get a bad name, but it is the constantly and unpatriotically reiterated charge of repudiation—which is a false charge—that has earned for Queensland a bad name.

The hon. member's next charge is "extracting huge royalties from millers for timber," and so on. The hon. member was corrected by the Secretary for Public Lands when he was speaking. We charge no tax or royalty on timber. At one time there was a royalty charged on timber taken off Crown lands. It was a reasonable charge, although I believe it was very little. Under the later system of marketing the timber off Crown lands, the Crown takes the value of the logs and sells the logs. What they charge is not a royalty, but the price of the timber. Not only that, but in order to get the fair market value of this timber it is put up to auction.

Mr. SWAYNE: You have an upset price.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is quite correct in saying we have an upset

price, but those who bid invariably bid more than the upset price. I know that those who bid get their heads together, in order to keep the price down as much as possible. Mr. Swain, Director of Forests, in a memorandum to the Minister, stated—

“Last year the Government actually sold to sawmillers some millions of feet of first-class pine at less than half its market value, and sacrificed £30,000 in the interests of price reduction.”

It went into the pockets of the sawmillers. If we did what the hon. member wants us to do, who would get the advantage? What he calls royalty is the price. Who will get the advantage? The same people who got the advantage of the £30,000—the sawmillers.

Mr. VOWLES: Why cannot the State sawmills work?

The PREMIER: They are working at their full capacity. The hon. gentleman is now advocating the extension of State socialism. Paragraph 15 refers to soldier settlement.

The leader of the Opposition very carefully shied off the question of the failure of the Government to satisfactorily settle soldier settlers on the land. He cannot charge the Government with neglecting its duty in that respect.

Mr. KERR: You have done less than any other State in the Commonwealth.

The PREMIER: The statement of the hon. member for Enoggera is absolutely untrue.

Mr. KERR: It can be proved.

The PREMIER: It cannot be proved. The quota allotted to Queensland under the repatriation agreement was 2,826. We have already settled upon soldiers' settlements 2,578, and we have provided for an additional 1,733 by way of assisting individual soldier settlers upon their own acquired holdings or upon freehold, if they desired to purchase, or in some other way. We have actually settled on the land 4,311, although the quota allotted is only 2,826. We have, in dealing with returned soldiers, imposed upon the Commonwealth a less per capita obligation than any other State, and, therefore, a less burden upon the individual soldier, and have given the settler a greater chance of making a success. We know that in New South Wales and Victoria, as a consequence of the necessity of repurchasing highly valued land, soldiers have been burdened in some cases to the extent of £2,500 by way of mortgage. It is a common expression of opinion in Southern States by those who have had anything to do with repatriation—I am not making any special claim for the Queensland Government—that soldiers have been more satisfactorily dealt with in Queensland, and a greater number proportionately have been provided for, and the prospects of success are appreciably greater, than in any other State.

Mr. KERR: This is the only State that has not given a fee-simple.

The PREMIER: At a banquet given to Lord Novar, late Governor-General of Australia, tendered in Brisbane, he generously stated that soldier settlers in Queensland had a far better chance of success and were much more liberally provided for than soldier settlers anywhere else. I have not dealt with the remarks of the hon. member for Burnett, who seconded the motion. I found

them so rambling and disconnected, and so divorced from the subject-matter of the motion, that I do not think it necessary to reply to them. Many of his arguments, and all of his devices, are utterly beneath contempt, when dealing with the question of criticism of the Government. He made one reference to land settlement in Queensland which, as usual, showed a total disregard of the truth. With his usual attempt to create a cheap hostility to the Government, he tried to belittle the leasehold system in Queensland. I happen to have a report by Mr. H. S. Gullett, who is the Commonwealth Superintendent of Immigration in Australia, and a man who can by no means be charged with any prejudice in favour of the Labour party. He says—

“The Government perpetual leasehold system appears to be very popular in Queensland, especially with new settlers with slender means. It is recognised to be as sound and permanent a tenure as freehold, and there is no apprehension on the score of reappraisal. Settlers are allowed to transfer and sell their improvements.”

Hon. members do not appreciate these utterances when they are published by an impartial observer. Apparently hon. members have got into the frame of mind, by a constant parrot-like reiteration of opposition to the Government, that they believe that those opinions in their minds are the commonly accepted doctrines of the whole of the community. They are wrong. I do not know what the hon. member expected by the motion he has launched—whether he desired to indulge in cheap fireworks, or whether he expected to accomplish some definite purpose. All the references he made could have been made in the Address in Reply debate. Apparently he has been spurred on by an outside party. He has been subjected to those extraneous influences that he is always condemning. It is rather a significant thing that, just before the announcement a few days before the meeting of Parliament he was giving notice of a want of confidence motion, the “Brisbane Courier” practically instructed the Opposition to challenge the Government at the first opportunity. I do not know if the hon. gentleman is making any attempt to forestall other Richmonds in the field on that side of the House. Nothing has come to light to-night to make the Government feel tremulous about their policy or their future. If the hon. gentleman has no more to attack the Government upon than the references contained in the motion which form the chief burden of his speech, then it is not necessary for the Government party to have very much concern about the future.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirand*): I beg to move the adjournment of the debate.

Question put and passed.

The resumption of the debate was made an Order of the Day for Tuesday next.

SPECIAL ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the House, at its rising, do adjourn until Tuesday next.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at twenty minutes to 12 o'clock p.m.