

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1921**

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"4. What amount has been expended, and what amount remains due in respect of—(a) material received; (b) machinery received; (c) plant received; (d) refrigerating plant; (e) cork insulation?"

"5. What is the total sum paid to date for all expenditure and charges under any contract or contracts and otherwise in connection with the cold stores, including the stores, railway sidings, wharf, offices, material, machinery, and plant?"

"6. What is the estimate of the further expenditure necessary to complete the stores, sidings, offices, and wharf?"

"7. When is it expected that the cold stores will be completed?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Binders*), on behalf of the Secretary for Public Works, replied—

"This information is being obtained."

USE OF CENTRAL QUEENSLAND COAL BY AUSTRALIAN NAVY.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*) asked the Premier—

"1. Is he aware of the fact that the Commonwealth Government is using Welsh coal in the Australian war vessels, while in Central Queensland there is an ample supply of suitable coal which, if used instead of the Welsh coal, would necessitate the employment of hundreds of additional miners in Central Queensland?"

"2. That in view of the Commonwealth Government's unsympathetic treatment of Central Queensland in the matter of coal supplies for the navy, will he make strong representations to the Honourable the Acting Prime Minister to have a fair proportion of the coal required for the navy supplied from the Central Queensland coalmines, with a view to creating further employment?"

"3. If it is found that any of the Central Queensland coals are not up to the standard required for steaming purposes in war time, will he endeavour to have them used by the Australian navy for ordinary cruising purposes in peace time?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2. Yes.

"3. Yes."

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER, 1921.

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

QUESTIONS.

GOVERNMENT COLD STORES AT HAMILTON.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

"In connection with the Government cold stores at the Hamilton—

"1. What is the proposed expenditure under any contract or contracts for the erection or construction of—(a) the stores; (b) railway sidings; (c) wharf; (d) offices?"

"2. What sums have already been spent in connection with the erection or construction of—(a) the stores; (b) railway sidings; (c) wharf; (d) offices?"

"3. What material, machinery, and plant have already been received for or in connection with the cold stores?"

SALE OF PLANT AT WARRA STATE COALMINE.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Minister representing the Secretary for Mines—

"1. Has the Government sold portion or all of the plant, materials, and buildings at the Warra Coalmine to a company, of which Mr. Lindsay is the manager, to be used in opening up and working a mine at Dingo Point, or elsewhere?"

"2. If so, what portion of the plant, materials, and buildings have been disposed of, and what is the value of same?"

"3. What is the value of remainder, if any?"

"4. On what terms was the plant, material, etc., disposed of; how much cash, and what length of time is arranged for the balance?"

"5. Was a cash offer made for the plant, material, and buildings, or any of them, by Mr. Haenke, or anyone else; if so, what was the amount of such offer?"

"6. Is the Government giving any assistance in opening up the mine or in testing the country at Dingo Point in any way whatever; if so, to what extent?"

"7. Why was the offer of miners who worked in the Warra mine to work the Warra mine on tribute, with a guaranteed output at a fixed price per ton, turned down by the Minister for Mines, though these men were prepared to take all the risk?"

"8. What was the value of the timber in the now flooded Warra mine which could have been saved if the offer of these miners had been accepted?"

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*), on behalf of the Secretary for Mines, replied—

"1 to 6. The Government are in treaty with Jimbour Colliery, Limited, for the purchase of a portion of the unsold portion of the Warra plant and machinery.

"7. The offer was not considered satisfactory.

"8. No timber could have been saved."

#### LOSS OF WHEAT SHIPPED BY STATE PRODUCE AGENCY.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"Is it true that over £14,000 was lost on the shipment of 16,000 bags of 'B' quality milling wheat sent overseas by the State Produce Agency to London per ss. 'Port Chalmers,' as disclosed by the advice he has admitted having received?"

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL, in the absence of Hon. W. Forgan Smith (*Mackay*), replied—

"Full information will be made available when the Estimates are being discussed."

#### PRICES OF MEAT—STATE AND PRIVATE SHOPS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), without notice, asked Mr. Fry—

"Are the prices given by you on the 24th August last as those then being charged at private butcher shops, and in the State shops, correct?"

"If so, in what respects do the figures given to the House on the 30th August last by the Home Secretary differ from your own?"

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*) replied—

"The information given to the House by the Home Secretary in reply to the apparently inspired question asked by the hon. member for Mundingburra is misleading. For the information of the hon. member who has asked the question, I might say that the Home Secretary

in no way questioned the accuracy of my statement in regard to the prices charged at Toowoomba and at the State butcher shops in Brisbane."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member may answer the question, but he cannot use any arguments in doing so.

Mr. FRY—

"The Home Secretary, however, did give prices supplied by the Price Fixing Commissioner as charged by the Master Butchers' Association. The prices given by me were those supplied by Messrs. Anderson and Cameron, a firm of retail butchers trading in a large way in Brisbane. I am given to understand that the Government are anxious to stabilise the meat industry in view of the enormous losses which would probably be disclosed by a true report on the State cattle stations and meatshops."

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*), without notice, asked the Home Secretary—

"Are the figures given by you on the 30th August in regard to the prices of meat correct?"

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

"They were the prices supplied by the master butchers to the Price Fixing Commissioner. I gave the figures exactly as they came from the Master Butchers' Association, Brisbane."

#### PAPERS.

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

Report of the Commissioner of Police for twelve months ended 30th June, 1921.

Annual Report of the Under Secretary for Mines for the year 1920.

#### ADDRESS IN REPLY.

##### RESUMPTION OF DEBATE.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Barcoo*): In addressing myself to this motion I desire to express the gratification of myself and my electors that during the recess His Excellency the Governor visited my electorate in common with many other pastoral electorates, because it gave him an opportunity to gain a first-hand knowledge of seeing what the measures placed on the statute-book by this Government actually represent. Such a first-hand opportunity, I feel sure, must impress His Excellency with the benefits likely to accrue to the West under our legislation. Furthermore, he visited some industrial enterprises peculiar to the pastoral industry, and I feel that he, as the representative of the Crown in Queensland, will at least have a working knowledge of the conditions prevailing in the West and of the people in the West, and that we can look for sympathy and broadmindedness from him so far as administration is concerned.

We have had an opportunity of listening to a great many viewpoints during this debate. The hon. member for Murilla was particularly interesting to many hon. members on this side of the House. He set out by repudiating his own party and kicking over the trammels of party discipline, and endeavoured to state a case to prove that it is not possible at the present juncture and

under the present conditions for the pastoral industry to successfully carry on. He commenced by quoting the wages paid and payable in 1914, and assured the House that the wages ranged from 25s. to 50s. per week, whereas, as a matter of fact, they ranged in 1914 from £1 to 35s. per week for exceptionally good men, more especially in the cattle area. He then quoted the wages prevailing to-day on stations—£3 to £5 7s. per week—and argued that the wages were too high to-day, and suggested by inference that it is desirable that we should return to lower rates of wages than are prevailing to-day. In order to strengthen his case, he said that, when times are good and things are prosperous, wages should be higher. He went on to trace the history of the pastoral award in its application to station hands. Now, I was very intimately associated with the passage of that award, and I know that the employers of pastoral labour by their actions have not proved, nor did they attempt to prove during that period that they endorsed the policy laid down by the hon. member for Murilla, that remuneration should be high when times are good. In 1916, the first pastoral award went through the Federal Arbitration Court, and we found that only those stations which were respondents to the claim were covered by the award—some 200 in Queensland. The industry was prosperous, and, in fact, booming, but did the pastoralists turn to their employees and say, "Because we are enjoying a period of prosperity we are prepared to share that prosperity with you and increase your wages?" No. They fought the application of the Federal arbitration award, which gave £2 8s. a week, and tried to limit its jurisdiction to the 200 odd respondents, who they claimed were the only ones that were bound by it. The award indicated that there was a moral obligation on the big employers of pastoral labour to pay the £2 8s. a week laid down by the Federal Arbitration Court, but they took advantage of a legal loophole, and refused to pay that amount, in spite of the fact that times were so prosperous. Now times are not so good, although we see that the wool market shows some signs of recovering; there was a letter in this morning's "Courier" showing that Queensland wools made a ready sale at advanced rates recently at Bradford. We know that the condition of the pastoral industry to-day, from the latest figures submitted by the pastoralists to the Arbitration Court, is better than it was in 1916. The position obtaining in the pastoral industry to-day is by no means one to give rise to pessimism. Yet we find that the leader of the Country party, who claims to speak with authority and to be the true representative of the Western mob, say, "The wages are too high. Give us a reduction! Let us return to the days when 20s. and 25s. was considered a fit and proper remuneration for a station hand." Having attacked wages successfully—as they will do, no doubt, if they ever obtain the reins of government—not only in the pastoral industry but in every other industry—they will then make an attempt to return to the old days when a galvanised iron hut situated on the plains, and subject to the burning and intense rays of a tropical sun, and furnished with a packing-case for furniture and a bunk on which to lie, was considered good enough for station hands. That is the desire of these representatives of reaction. They are trying now to attack a position that has been reached by years of

conscious organisation; but they cannot do it, because the pastoral worker to-day recognises the party that has given him these concessions, and he is not prepared to drop the substance for the shadow. Furthermore, the pastoral employees have a fairly accurate knowledge of the leader of the Country party, Mr. Edkins. The hon. member for Murilla, in the course of his speech, indicated that youths come along carrying their swags and saying, "Give us a job, boss. We are prepared to work for £2 a week," and the boss says, "We cannot give you a job, because the Arbitration Court prevents it."

Mr. MORGAN: Quite true.

Mr. BULCOCK: He says again it is a fact. I want to show how he deliberately and wilfully misled the House on this question. He said it was impossible to employ youths seventeen and eighteen years of age because the Arbitration Court award stood in the way.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not so.

Mr. BULCOCK: The rate of wages for youths seventeen years of age is £1 per week, and for youths eighteen years of age £1 15s. This would indicate that the hon. member is prepared to come into this House and make a deliberate misstatement, as a reference to "Hansard" will demonstrate.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. BULCOCK: It would appear that at the present time there is a deliberate intention on the part of the pastoral employers to put on the track as many men as they possibly can. It is easy to see through that desire. It is based on the fact that, if they can create a period of depression in the pastoral areas—if they can cause a big number of men to be carrying their swags—there will be a reaction, and the men will say, "This is the result of the Land Acts Amendment Act. We will wipe out that Act." That is the intention. They desire to use the individual whom they are putting on the track in order to consolidate their claim for the repeal of the Land Acts Amendment Act of 1920. I know the work that has to be done on stations which could be performed for a certain sum is being deferred, and it will cost a good deal more to do it. The pastoralists are prepared to pay a good deal more to have it done in order to gain the end for which they are striving—to drive in the wedge of economic depression as far as the pastoral industry is concerned, and by putting men on the track to consolidate the attitude that is being taken up by members sitting opposite. We have the hon. member for Murilla committing himself to the statement that the awards are the cause of all the trouble.

Mr. MORGAN: Hear, hear!

Mr. BULCOCK: Hon. gentlemen opposite have the audacity to tell us and the country that they do not stand for any tinkering with the Industrial Arbitration Act or the Arbitration Court in any shape or form. They actually went to the country at the last election on the platform of "No tinkering with the Arbitration Court." Then, when they come into this House, they tell us that the awards are the cause of all the trouble. It is part of the plan to embark on a reduction in wages, and it is significant in this direction to notice that the anti-Labour forces twelve months ago were crying, "More pro-

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duction! Produce more." They have now dropped that cry; there is a silence surrounding it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. BULCOCK: To-day we have the hon. member for Oxley saying, "Away with the Arbitration Court!" and advocating a reduction in wages.

The HOME SECRETARY: He has not yet advocated a reduction in interest.

Mr. BULCOCK: I am coming to that. We find that, at the present time, there is a distinct desire on the part of the pastoral companies, whose representative is one of the leaders of the party opposite, to depress pastoral wages. It is interesting at this juncture to examine pastoral wages, so that we may form some basis of determination. I unhesitatingly take the stand that the highest possible remuneration that may be paid to a station hand, when every factor is taken into consideration, is inadequate for the life he is compelled to lead. We find that the awards are founded on the amount required for the maintenance of a man, his wife, and children. That may be a good thing to apply in congested city areas, where educational and medical facilities are at every man's back door. But when you come to consider the difference between the position of pastoral employees and that of employees in big metropolitan areas, you cannot help being struck with the difference that prevails between the ways in which each class conduct their lives. In the first place, there is no—or, at any rate, very little—monotony in the life of the average city toiler. The life of the Western man and his family is one long run of monotony. There is no variation from the incessant toil and grind of work. The only rest is the rest of sleep, and, when perhaps facilities for enjoyment are available, they are too exhausted to desire them. Then, again, the average pastoral worker is engaged in a seasonal industry, which allows him to function perhaps only three, or four, or five months in the year. The average shearer does not shear five months in the year; the average station hand does not work on the stations more than four or five months in the year.

Mr. JONES: He works all the year round.

Mr. BULCOCK: Only a small residue are permanent station hands, but they are a declining quantity. In the third place the worker in the town has every opportunity to educate his child. In the bush that opportunity is singularly lacking. An itinerant teacher, perhaps, visits him now and again, but that at best is an inadequate way of instructing the young idea. It is a truism that the child of everyone who is pioneering the big areas and developing the richest industry of Queensland should have equal opportunity with anybody else's child, and should have the chance of functioning in the direction in which he is most capable. Because this is so it is absolutely essential that a high wage should be paid to the pastoral employee. He should receive more than the mere cost of maintenance and sustenance; he should be able to put by a little so that, when the time comes, he may educate his children in the way the State desires. It is due to hon. members opposite, through the activity of the interests represented in this House in stopping the credit of Queensland, that a very serious and very

grave stagnation is to be seen in the education service; but we claim that the employers who are responsible for having sent the delegation home should be obliged to find this money in the form of wages, so that the children of the pastoral employee may be able to go to the bigger centres of population for adequate and proper education to equip them as good citizens of the State. Then there is the question of insurance. The pastoral worker runs risks that the city toiler does not. If he falls ill, a doctor is perhaps 160 miles away, and, before he can be taken to the doctor or the doctor can be brought to him, his case has very frequently assumed such a grave complexion that hope has to be abandoned.

The high school is a common [4 p.m.] place in the life of the town child. The town children are able to avail themselves of a high school training which is not open to the child in the country. During the recess I had the singular good fortune to induce the Secretary for Public Instruction, Mr. Huxham, to pay a visit to my electorate. I think he will admit that the children of the West are as bright and cheery, and as happy, and made of as good material as the children of the towns.

Mr. MOORE: In spite of the monotony?

Mr. BULCOCK: Yes, in spite of the monotony. What would they be if they were brought to the city? The West is the home of freedom. That is where pioneers of democratic freedom lived for years, and where they are content to remain, and the children I refer to are the children of these men. Surely they are worthy of some consideration! Hon. members opposite would give a mere wages sustenance to the men working in the West, and they would make the children follow in the footsteps of their fathers. That means, that when the child in the West grows to manhood without training or calling, with nothing in the world except his own naked capacity, he leaves the bush and comes to the town. That is why people are leaving the bush for the city. Hon. members opposite are always prating about the development of the West, but they always show their opposition to every pastoral award, and would like to bring about a reduction to the 1907 basis. Hon. members opposite talk about wishing to see people make their homes in the West, but they will not give their children the facilities they desire. We know that hon. members opposite would depress wages in the pastoral industry to such an extent that they would get back to the old days of "10, 8, 2, and ½."

We know that the pastoralists make class war at all times. The economic conditions they have created here show that they are warring against the defenceless men of the West while they themselves stand behind the ramparts of economic privilege. This is the doctrine of hon. members opposite. Since we have heard so much about class warfare from hon. members opposite, I might read a quotation to show that the class warfare is not all on one side. We find this statement in a publication called "Industrial Germany," written by Mr. W. H. Dawson, a well-known industrial authority—

"You have recently taken into your employ three young men lately in the service of the firm of ——— of this town. The behaviour of these men when

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employed by ——— was altogether condemned by us, and we beg you, both in the interests of the federation and your own interests, to discharge them at once, or at the latest within a fortnight, and not to engage them again. If we hear from our confidential agent at ——— that this has not been done, we shall be compelled regretfully to advise our members not to buy from you, and to obtain their supplies from the firm of ——— instead."

That emanates from the Employers' Federation of Labour in Germany; but class warfare and class tactics are the same the world over. This is the same federation which, in 1912, in recognising the magnificent services performed by the secretary, presented him with a cheque for £50,000 when he resigned from that federation. I will now show what is happening in Queensland, and bring it right home. There is a black list in the pastoral industry to-day, although it may not be known to hon. members opposite, nor perhaps to hon. members on this side. I can assure members of this House that, in spite of the strictly confidential nature of the document, and although it was circulated with extreme discretion and secrecy, I have seen a copy of that pamphlet, which is really a black list, that is published by the United Graziers' Association of Queensland. We find that at the termination of shearing the Pastoralists' Union require each employer to send a return to the central office. In this return individual employees' names are given, and any information as to how the individual worked. The highest tally of each shearer must be given, and also the lowest tally, and the average tally. Then there is a column in which is entered the class of shearer, meaning whether he is fast or slow, or whether he is a clean shearer, or a docile shearer. Then there is a column in which comments are made about the shearers. It is used for general remarks, and these are the sort of remarks which are made about the shearers—

"Bit of an agitator."  
 "Too fond of the bunk."  
 "Lazy."  
 "Causes trouble."  
 "Won't shear wet sheep."  
 "Needs watching."

All these are fair samples of the remarks made about the shearers.

Mr. GLEDSON: It sounds like the Employers' Federation.

Mr. BULCOCK: It emanates from the same source. It is part of the activities of the Employers' Federation. Yet hon. gentlemen opposite tell us that they stand for freedom of thought and freedom of action. The only freedom of thought and action they stand for is the freedom which coincides with the desires of the pastoral employers, as evidenced quite conclusively by the black list I have just referred to.

We hear a lot of talk about a reduction in wages from hon. members opposite, but there is no talk of a reduction in any other direction. We know that one of the things that go to make up the sum total of the cost of production is interest. We know that money is lent and re-lent, and we know that a considerable volume of interest is piling up on that money all that time. We know that there is an inflation of the currency in Australia; but, if we follow the history of this inflation, we find that in Aus-

tralia the interest grows first, then prices, and then wages. Under the economic laws that hon. gentlemen opposite subscribe to, and have created, the wage-earner is always last on the list. It is only when conditions become unendurable that wages reluctantly follow the rise in interest and prices. That is the position, as defined by the economic laws laid down by some of the exponents of the school opposite. Even though wages fall, we know that interest cannot fall in Australia for some considerable period. Nine months ago the rate of interest on the London money exchange fell a few points, but it immediately hardened on account of the big commitments of various countries and the inflation of the currency, so it is impossible for interest to fall for some time. In Australia we are paying interest on Commonwealth loans at the rate of £44,000,000 per annum. That is a direct charge against industry, and, therefore, the workers must pay it. That interest is mainly paid on war bonds and such like security—security which is not subject to income tax. In the final analysis, therefore, the production of industry has to bear the whole burden of interest. When the production of industry has to bear the whole burden, it is an economic axiom that interest must be high; and, if interest is high, and prices are high, then wages must be high, also. That is a recognised economic law. We are only moving in a cycle when we postulate this fact. Hon. members opposite talk about reducing wages, without touching the question of interest at all, although the question of interest is a vital one to the wellbeing of Australia. It is absurd for hon. members opposite to talk about reducing wages, when nobody is prepared to say there should be a reduced rate of interest. The workers always pay the interest in the final analysis. If wages fall there is an increasing purchasing power to the bondholders. Therefore, decreasing wages are in more directions than one essentially favourable to the purchasing capacity of the leisured class. That is the game that is being fostered by hon. members opposite. We used to hear the cry about producing more, but what is happening in England at the present time? We cannot find markets, because we are producing too much. Hon. gentlemen opposite are recognising that the "produce more" slogan is nearly dead, and now they are advocating reduced wages. The hon. member for Port Curtis and the hon. member for Oxley are in the van of this movement, and they are the accredited mouthpieces of their party. We have heard a good deal about the decay of Labour. The Labour party—the humane party, the socialistic party, or whatever party you may desire to term it—is the only party with a future. (Opposition laughter.) It may be that the whirligig of time will give the reactionary class a temporary ascendancy, and it may be that they will be able to induce individuals who have no economic relationship with them to accept their doctrines for a short space of time. This fact is sure—that the anti-Labour forces stand for reaction. They want to mark time and stand where they are. They want to stand and cry: "Let us pause! Let us reckon up." The Labour party stands for progress, and for those things which will be the accomplished facts of to-morrow; the anti-Labour faction stands for those things which were the killing facts of yesterday. The Opposition cling frantically to the old order, the old hopes, the old institutions, and the old

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thoughts which they voice from every platform. Every speaker on the other side who gets up in this House insinuates, "Let us go back to the old order of things"—the "good old days," as they say. The good old days that stood for want, hunger, privation, poverty, and degradation! Surely, there is some nobler outlook in life than that! Hon. members opposite, or their representatives, years ago were accustomed to preach what is known as the Malthusian theory. They said it is undesirable for too many individuals to reach maturity in any community embraced by the capitalistic interests of those days. The war came along, and, as soon as it did, the man with five or six eligible sons to fight to uphold the existing order was regarded as a hero—as a man who was worth looking after. They talked about the era of reconstruction! Where is it? Where do we find the new heaven and the new earth that hon. gentlemen opposite preached from the platform during the time that they were recruiting? Has it materialised? No! We see the advocacy at all times, in season and out of season, of a return to the old order. The Labour party has frequently—with justice—twitted hon. members opposite on the question of initiative. They say, "Give us something new." It is significant, when we come to analyse the position in regard to the employers' organisations, that we find that those organisations are based absolutely upon the principle laid down by our own organisations some very considerable time ago.

I wish to deal now with the matter of the spread of prickly-pear in the Barcoo. This matter can be approached without the heat of party antagonism. I recognise, and have recognised for some considerable time, that the spread of prickly-pear means a loss of wealth to the community as a whole. If the prickly-pear is allowed to take possession of these very rich Western plains, it will only repeat the experience known to hon. members opposite in their own electorates.

Mr. VOWLES: It has taken the Government five years to find this out.

Mr. BULCOCK: No, I have mentioned this matter on several occasions in this House. At a recent Land Court at Blackall, Mr. Shannon drew attention to the spread of prickly-pear in the Barcoo district, more especially in the neighbourhood of Blackall. I do not desire to say who is to blame for the introduction of pear into that district, but there is an inclination on the part of the big leaseholders not to destroy the pear, because they know that, with the effluxion of time, their leases will expire, and the poor incoming selector will have to destroy that pear. I urge the Secretary for Public Lands to give this matter his very serious consideration.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I am doing it now.

Mr. BULCOCK: With the exception of one small restricted area, there was little pear in the neighbourhood of Blackall five years ago. When I was in Blackall quite recently I spent some considerable time riding about the district, and I was alarmed at the spread of the pear. The Lands Department, through the Minister, was good enough to send a competent officer to the Barcoo to go into the matter. It is possible at this juncture to control it, but in a few years' time it may not be possible to do very much with it. It will be more difficult to destroy the pear on those Western plains if it once

gets a hold than in the timbered areas, because there will be no timber available to destroy it. It would be a good thing if the Secretary for Public Lands would send two experts to the Barcoo to give the people an opportunity of learning how to destroy the pear. There are good methods and bad methods of doing it, and most of the people in that district do not understand the best methods of destroying the pear. It would be absolutely absurd to lead people who are willing to destroy this noxious weed to try and discover the best methods when there are men experienced in the destruction of pear available to give the information.

Mr. MORGAN: Give them free poison.

Mr. BULCOCK: Give them anything. I believe that at the present time the pear can be destroyed by the expenditure of a few paltry thousands of pounds, but in five years I believe it will take hundreds of thousands of pounds. The pear would become acclimatised, and, as it is spreading at an alarming rate, something must be done in the interests of the pastoral community as a whole and not in the interests of one section only. We have heard a good deal of discussion revolving round the question of the Labour party taking the result of the local government elections as an expression of the voice of the people. I will show what happened in Blackall, which will indicate that the Labour party has got back to the old place from which it started when it had to watch the parliamentary rolls in order to gain representation in Parliament. I am not going to attach any blame to any individual. In the first place the town clerk or the shire clerk was the returning officer—I say that is an unwise course to adopt. The total number of electors on the State roll for the Blackall area—which embraced the Blackall town area and the Kargoolnah Shire Council—was 1,556, and the number of people on the municipal and shire rolls was 1,300. Hon. members opposite may take advantage of that statement to say that those figures show an inflation of the State roll. In anticipation of that argument, I will point out that in the roll for No. 2 Division of the Kargoolnah Shire Council there were thirty-five people who we knew were in the district whose names had been removed from the roll because they had removed from one division to another and had been disfranchised in consequence. We submitted this list to the returning officer in Blackall.

Mr. MOORE: Why don't you amend the Act? (Laughter.)

Mr. BULCOCK: I feel sure it is not the intention of the Act that that should be allowed. I scrutinised in a booth on polling day where there were about fifty votes cast. During that day sixteen people came into the booth and made statutory declarations to the effect that their names had been wrongly omitted from the roll. At least sixteen others came in and claimed their votes who would not fill in a statutory declaration. I knew these people. They had been disfranchised because they had moved from one division to another. Those people who were out of the shire or municipality engaging in their occupations were deprived of a vote, which would have made a great difference in the number of votes cast.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: We wanted you to have a postal vote, but you would not have it.

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Mr. BULCOCK: In spite of the fact that many Labour supporters were disfranchised in these two areas, the difference between the Labour candidate and the anti-Labour candidate was—for the chairman 23, and for the councillors 22.

I recognise that we are facing big problems, and it is only by progress, by thought, and by application that the world can overcome them. I recognise that, if we persist in the old order of conservatism and capitalism, civilisation will suffer a great rebuff. The party of which I [4.30 p.m.] have the honour of being a member stands for progress, for honesty in legislation, and for those things which make for the best in life. Those things which the Labour party stand for will always be enshrined in the human heart as the best aims and objects of existence, and because that is so the Labour party, although it may go through its periods of trial, will in the final analysis emerge supreme.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Orley*): I look upon Speeches from the Throne which we get prior to the opening of each session of Parliament as voicing the determinations and hopes of Governments. In the early days they certainly were determinations, but latterly they have sunk to almost what one might call insignificant hopes, because a more colourless, aimless kind of outline of policy I do not think it would be possible to find than is included in the present Speech from the Throne which we know is prompted by hon. members opposite. I have taken the trouble to compare the various Speeches we have had during the last five or six years, and the deductions one can draw from them are extraordinary. I have in my hand the one placed before us on 18th August, 1920, and I think one may quite accurately describe that as the bellicose utterance of the inexperienced. If you study the Speech of the 9th August, 1921, all you can call it is a mass of colourless pleadings of the disappointed. In the few remarks I intend to address to this matter I purpose dealing with some of the main hopes or arguments brought forward in this Speech.

One of the most gratifying subjects is that which emanates from the experience of His Excellency the Governor. Those make good reading, and it is encouraging to hear such excellent advice coming from a gentleman who has made it his business to travel through the length and breadth of Queensland and give us his opinions. Of course, the question of immigration is hinged round what His Excellency says, to an enormous extent. In that regard it is disappointing that we do not find or hear of some definite solution or course which the Government propose to take in that direction. I have here an extract from a speech made by the Premier on 2nd February last. We do occasionally get flashes of statesmanship from that hon. gentleman, although I must admit that he is somewhat chameleon in his nature—that what he says on one occasion one has difficulty in tracing on another—and although the aspirations he has voiced here are excellent, yet I can also produce utterances he has made in which he practically sets his face against any immigration policy in regard to the State. This is what he said on 2nd February last—

“We could never hope to be a self-reliant nation or to be an entity in history, or anything else, unless we got more

people into Australia. We would have to fill the empty spaces, for we were menaced at the present time by a danger which only too few recognised—the danger from the Asiatic. This was no figment of the imagination. Public men in France to whom he had talked on this matter ridiculed the idea of Australia being able to remain a white country with only a handful of people holding 3,000,000 square miles of territory. Australia would one day be called upon to defend herself against an Asiatic invasion.”

Each of us must admit that that is sound and absolutely consistent with what we know to be the case. Where are the indications that we are facing that danger in the only way that would be effective—that is by bringing population into our midst in such numbers as would permit of the unoccupied spaces in Queensland being utilised to the fullest extent, and at the same time providing the elements of defence. This question of immigration must be faced. We have men landing on our shores to-day who are faced with the greatest difficulties one can imagine. We have the experience of Mr. Saunders, who landed in Brisbane, and who produced to the Minister, and certainly to the Press, absolute evidence of the inducements which were held out to him to come to this country—inducements which, to say the least of it, were utterly misleading. In view of the reply which the Secretary for Public Lands gave him when he arrived here, I intend to read an extract with regard to Mr. Saunders's statement, because it gives the crux of the whole position. This is an illustration of the conditions which the immigrants were looking forward to when they arrived at our shores—

“Mr. Saunders has with him pamphlets that were distributed in London which involve the Government. One of these is entitled, ‘What the Queensland Government is doing for Discharged Soldiers.’ It sets out that the Government recognises ‘the national debt due to the soldiers;’ that its surveyors are engaged surveying railways which will open up 2,500,000 acres of ‘first-class agricultural and dairying lands capable of settling 15,000 soldiers;’ that on each block an area is cleared to enable the soldier to make a living; that approved applicants will be sent to a training farm at Beerburum, where they will receive technical instruction and sustenance allowance in the meantime; that advances up to £1,200 are made according to the value of the land and improvements; and that selectors may draw up to £500 against improvements that are made.”

This gentleman was not satisfied with the publication that he received—I presume on the authority of Queensland's Agent-General—so he obtained a confirming letter from Mr. E. J. Dillon, the Secretary of the Agent-General's Office in London, guaranteeing the bona fides of the information supplied, and adding—

“It may further be mentioned that if you take advantage of the Government training farms, sustenance allowance is granted by the Government for the assistance of your family.”

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When did he promise that?

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Mr. ELPHINSTONE: This gentleman arrived here, and this is the kind of treatment that he received—

“Yet when Mr. Saunders arrived here with his wife he was told there was no money for him, that a document approving of him as ‘a farm worker,’ and signed by H. C. Stuart, Director of Migration and Settlement, was not recognised by this State as official, and that he could have land, but no assistance in developing it.”

That is the unsympathetic treatment which is being meted out to these ex-service men, who, I maintain, would be the finest immigrants we could possibly encourage to come to this State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I contend that a man who has fought for his country, who has been a soldier of the Empire, is one of the finest immigrants that this State can encourage, and if the Minister has not discovered that, it is deeply significant. This question of immigration is of vast importance, and the hon. gentleman, by his interjections, shows that he, as a member of the Government, is at least not alive to the great importance of the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: More so than you are.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is the situation that has to be faced, and we are indebted to the Governor for having called our attention to this matter. It is deplorable that the Speech from the Throne, which outlines the intentions, hopes, and aims of the Government, does not make any reference worth speaking of to this important question of immigration.

I want to pass on to another very important point which is linked up with the question of immigration—that is, water conservation. Another remarkable feature about the Speech from the Throne is that a great amount of generalities are indulged in with regard to the importance of water conservation and irrigation, but absolutely no reference is made to that one outstanding example of water conservation or irrigation which we have at Inkerman. All we have been able to extract has been by way of certain answers to questions which the hon. member for Bowen has helped us to obtain. I happen to know a little about farming in the Bowen district, and have had some experience of water conservation and irrigation in that area, and it has cost me quite a lot of money to get that experience. I want to draw these comparisons to show the present position at Inkerman. This is the Government that talks about the necessity of water conservation and irrigation, and this is their actual experience—the only undertaking they have attempted. In 1916, when this wonderful scheme was launched, we were told, as the outcome of estimates then made, that the expenditure of £131,000 was going to irrigate 20,000 acres—that is equivalent, approximately, to 170 farms. If that had been consummated, the actual cost per acre of the scheme would have been £6 10s. That means that with an average farm area of 118 acres the cost of the irrigation per farm is £807. Taking 5 per cent. as the reasonable rate of interest to charge these settlers, the interest and redemption

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upon the money sunk in that scheme would mean that each farmer would pay at the rate of £44 10s. per year—quite a reasonable proposition. No man who is farming 118 acres and who gets water when he needs it would be loath or backward in paying £44 10s. per year for the privilege. But what is the position? After attempting for five years to put this scheme into operation, we find the estimated acreage has dropped from 20,000 acres to 10,500 acres, and the estimated cost has risen from £131,000 for 20,000 acres to £400,000 for 10,500 acres. That is only an estimate. When it is finished, we shall probably find it has increased to £500,000. Therefore, the cost per acre has increased from £6 10s. per acre to £38 per acre, and the cost to the farmer at the rate of 5½ per cent. on that expenditure has increased from £44 10s. to £246 12s. per annum. That is the position as we find it to-day, if we accept the Treasurer's utterances as correct, which, no doubt, he believes them to be, but which, I contend, will be found to be hopelessly inadequate when the actual balance-sheet is prepared with regard to the cost of this scheme. That irrigation scheme shows that any Government which is going to take on the vast question of water conservation and irrigation, and which is wrapped up in the question of immigration, must have better brains at their disposal and better Cabinet control than has been possible during the last five years.

I pass on to another very important point—that is, the north-south railway line. As Queenslanders, we would naturally like to see this north-south line coming through Western Queensland to develop what is now an undeveloped part of our State; but we have also to face the position as Australians and look at it from the Federal point of view. I do not purpose dealing with the arguments for and against the proposal at this stage. All I intend to do is to call attention to one or two of the arguments which the Government have used in the Speech with the object of inducing the Federal Government to adopt the Queensland route in preference to the South Australian. This is what is said—

“The only obstacle to its adoption is the Commonwealth's contention that it is irrevocably committed to the latter in consequence of an agreement made with South Australia. In the interests of Australia as a whole my Ministers hope”——

Full of hope! You can sweep up hope in this Speech—

“that this attitude will be adopted by the Commonwealth.”

“Repudiation” again is the hope of the hon. gentlemen opposite. This is an actual contract entered into by the Commonwealth Government with South Australia, and the Government of Queensland hope that the Commonwealth Government are going to put the pencil through that so that it will become another form of repudiation.

Mr. HARTLEY: No, we hope South Australia will abandon it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If it does, well and good; they are the only people who can, to be honest and honourable about the transaction. Here is the point I want to stress—

“and, if necessary, South Australia compensated for any monetary loss the deviation may mean to her.”

We have had in this House two illustrations of this kind of repudiation which one cannot help but refer back to, because the present position of Queensland is wrapped up and interwoven with this repudiation doctrine which, unfortunately, is creeping into our minds. First of all there is expressed the hope that Australia will repudiate her contract with South Australia.

Mr. HARTLEY: No—that South Australia will abandon her claim.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There is no such suggestion. It says—

“The superior advantages of the former route are universally allowed, and the only obstacle to its adoption is the Commonwealth’s contention that it is irrevocably committed to the latter, in consequence of an agreement made with South Australia. In the interests of Australia as a whole, my Ministers hope that this attitude will be abandoned by the Commonwealth, and, if necessary, South Australia compensated for any monetary loss the deviation may mean to her.”

Had the pastoralists agreed to the introduction of the repudiation measure which affected them, there would have been nothing for us to say, because they are the parties who are mainly interested. But they did not agree to it. It is exactly the same in this instance. South Australia’s view of the matter is not asked for, but the Commonwealth are advised by our State Ministry to abandon South Australia and simply tear up the obligation which exists. I want to stress the point where the Speech says—

“if necessary, South Australia compensated.”

Where have we suggested compensation when we have introduced repudiation? Did we ever suggest compensation to the pastoral lessees when we introduced retrospective rents covering the past six years, representing increases of approximately 300 per cent.? There was no suggestion of compensation there: the only suggestion was one of extortion. It was exactly the same in connection with the Brisbane tramways. Legislation was brought into this House to cut down the value of the tramways, but not to compensate the company. It is all right to suggest to the other fellow that he should compensate, but when it comes to hon. gentlemen opposite compensating they do not believe in it.

The Speech also deals with the question of vessels belonging to the Orient Company calling at Queensland ports. The Premier has been trying to induce that company to bring its boats up the coast. I should be much better pleased if I saw the Government trying to induce the calling of the British-India Company’s boats at the ports of North Queensland on their first arrival in Australia. The first port at which oversea boats call always derives benefit. With Cairns and Townsville as the last ports of call of the Orient boats, we secure very little advantage. If, on the other hand, we endeavour to get the British-India line to come straight from Great Britain and touch at Cairns and Townsville as the first ports of call, it is going to be very much better for Queensland’s advancement. I am very glad to notice by the Press that the British-India Company is serious in its intention to foster this action.

I want to deal now with the somewhat plaintive utterance regarding the surplus. The Speech says—

“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.”

This is a matter which can be dealt with better and more fully when we are discussing the Financial Statement; but I would remind those who lay some importance on that puny surplus that it was obtained by an increased revenue of £1,300,000. If a Treasurer cannot produce a small surplus of some £9,000 or £10,000 when he has an increased revenue over his anticipations of £1,300,000, he is a sorry prophet.

I am glad to note that the pleadings of the Opposition during the past few years have resulted in the Government making up their minds to give some redress in the matter of income tax to the primary producers. A five-years’ average to the primary producer is absolutely a fair thing. Any man who has engaged in primary production must admit that it is reasonable, and it is one of the practical ways of encouraging the primary producer. The pity of it is that we get it at the last gasp of this Government instead of at the first. It has been preached from this side of the House for years, and it is only now, when they are about to fall, that we see the suggestion put forward. I am not a believer in class legislation of any description. I believe in all producers having a reasonable amount of consideration given to them, and I believe that in the matter of income tax the primary producer needs greater protection than the secondary producer in the towns. I should have been better pleased had the Government given a five-year average to the primary producer and a three-year average to the secondary producer or commercial man. We all know of innumerable instances of men paying income tax one year, whereas, if they balanced their profit during one year with their losses of the previous year, they would show a debit balance and would not be called upon to pay income tax for the year in which the profit was made. The averaging of income is essentially fair, and it is essentially fair also that the primary producer should be given a longer period than the secondary producer because of the greater influences which interfere with his prosperity.

I want to pass on to the question of the tramway system. It is difficult to conceive what is the attitude of the Government at the present moment. They are simply sitting on the fence and doing nothing. Yet we know quite well that, if some decision were come to, it would probably be one of the quickest means of relieving unemployment. These gentlemen, in their wisdom, sit by and say nothing. It is very unusual for hon. gentlemen opposite to be undetermined in regard to their actions. I will give them the credit that we generally know what they intend doing. That has been one redeeming feature of hon. gentlemen opposite. But in this regard, for some reason or other, they sit by and say nothing, and see a wonderful system lying more or less dormant. We have a number of suburbs crying out for tramway extensions—not railways running into the unknown which will not pay for ten, fifteen, or twenty years to come. Tramway extensions would pay from the very moment they

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started operating. Yet hon. members opposite will not give any extension of term, but keep the company living on the edge of a volcano while doing nothing themselves. There is some mystery about this which we will delve into at some future time. I suggest that hon. gentlemen on the other side cast aside their uncertainty and do something in the direction of determining this question, bearing in mind that this is a public utility, and, so long as the matter is held up, it is affecting the credit of Queensland.

I will pass on to the reference in the Speech to Mount Morgan and Chillagoe. In my opinion no interference from outside is going to settle the question. It is purely a business matter. On the one hand are the employers and on the other hand the employees, each putting a value on a certain article. It would be economically unsound to interfere by outside influence with the course of events; it must find its own level. I want hon. gentlemen opposite to understand that in a matter of this description it is not the employer who settles the wage, but it is the industry itself. It is not what the Mount Morgan Company says it can afford to pay; it is the selling price of the material they produce which determines the wage. I am not saying whether the wages are high or low. I am dealing with the matter on an economic basis, and suggesting that the amount which can be paid in wages is determined by the value of the product. Therefore I contend that the only solution is that which the men and the employers will find themselves.

Mr. HARTLEY: On the basis of the price they get for their product?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: No, I do not say that at all. The hon. gentleman must know that there are other costs than wages in connection with the production of material; there are overhead charges which every industry has to bear. The deeper hon. gentlemen delve into this matter the better equipped will they be to take a hand in the industrial development of this State. It is because they understand only one side of the question and do not attempt to understand the viewpoint of the other side that we never get any solution of these difficulties. That leads me to confirm what I have already said, that no outside influence is going to help the Mount Morgan crisis. The men have to study both sides of the question, as have the Mount Morgan employers, and the sooner they get down to bedrock in a proper spirit the quicker we shall see the crisis solved. Hon. gentlemen opposite think that it is our desire on this side to go round the country with a scythe and cut down everyone who is enjoying a good wage. All they are waiting for before they go to the country is to get a catch cry. I remember when we had the butcher shops trotted out in 1913—nothing but cheap meat and cheap food was the cry. It acted. It sent hon. gentlemen back with a bigger majority than they had when they went out. Then on the last occasion we had the catch cry of the delegation and the unwarranted interference of the financiers of Great Britain with the liberties of hon. gentlemen opposite. They sound silly when we mention them here; but put these gentlemen on the soapbox, and with fluent tongues they succeed in influencing the opinions of a number of their

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electors. All these gentlemen are waiting for at the present moment is to try and discover in some of our utterances a catch cry. You can see them throwing out bait for us to take, such as that of cutting down wages. Then they will go to the electors and say, "Here is the party that is going to sack you and cut down your wages," and that kind of thing. I will let these gentlemen into a secret. When this party does go to the country, it is going to tell the cold, unvarnished truth about the present situation. (Government laughter.) It is not

going to offer any doles or bribes [5 p.m.] to the people. It is going to tell the actual facts and show the position as it exists to-day. It is going to show what is the actual result of the nightmare that we have been suffering from for the last six years. Hon. gentlemen opposite need not worry. We are going to tell the people the plain, unvarnished truth, and leave hon. members opposite to paddle their own canoes the best way they can.

Mr. HARTLEY: What about the Mount Morgan settlement?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: We will tell the people all about the Mount Morgan settlement, the unemployment, and all the other issues. I am not going to burke the question, but I have too much to talk about at the present time. Regarding operations at Chillagoe, we can take that as an illustration of what the Government are doing. I make bold to say that these operations are costing this country approximately £1,000 or £1,500 per week.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are quite wrong.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I am not wrong. You do not give us any information when we ask for it. You sidetrack every question that is put to you, and we have to resort to all kinds of device to get the information we require. The Government are inquisitorial to a great degree when they are finding out what is a taxpayer's income, and what is his expenditure; yet we, as the representatives of the taxpayers, cannot get similar information from the Government when we require it. If we ask how money is expended, the question is sidetracked by all kinds of subterfuges, in order to stave off the evil day. During the past few weeks it has been painful to see the way responsible Ministers conceive it to be their duty to sidetrack questions, and refuse to give information to the Opposition. The fact remains that it is costing the country from £1,000 to £1,500 per week to run the smelters at Chillagoe. Suppose the Mount Morgan Company had that money to pay out every week, what a great success they would have made of it, too! Any Government that is going to rely upon copper exceeding the price that it is to-day is living in a fool's paradise.

The HOME SECRETARY: Copper is the smallest production there.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Judging by the utterances of the Secretary for Mines, he is vainly hoping that the prices of copper and lead are going to increase to something like the war level. I prophesy that neither copper nor lead will increase much beyond their price to-day. As a matter of fact, the price

of copper to-day is 20 per cent. to 25 per cent. higher than it was before the war.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are wrong. I will give you the figures.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I have got the figures myself. Copper was £56 in 1914, before the war, and to-day it is £68, or, approximately, 20 per cent. higher.

The HOME SECRETARY: You are absolutely wrong.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If I am wrong, I will have the manliness to admit it. I listened to the hon. member for Bowen pleading the case for the electorate he represents, and an electorate of which I am very fond. The hon. gentleman referred to the State iron and steel works at Bowen, but let me tell him that he will never see any State iron and steel works in Bowen.

Mr. COLLINS: I am well aware of that, if your party can stop it.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I did not say my party was going to stop it, but I will tell you our proposal. At any rate, this party is not going to spend any more money on State enterprises. If the hon. member wants to know our policy for Bowen, I will give him my opinion, and it is the opinion I am going to vote for when the question of framing our policy is being considered. First of all, we intend to complete the railway to the Bowen coalfields.

Mr. COLLINS: It will be completed without you.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You will be dead and buried before it is built, at the present rate. When we complete the Bowen coalfields railway, we will see that coal-handling appliances are installed to handle the coal as soon as it is available. When that is done, we will leave it to private enterprise to step in. Are the big iron and steel works at Newcastle run by the State? No; they are run by private enterprise; and it is because they are so well run by a private company that Newcastle has become the manufacturing hub of Australia. When we get the railway completed to the Bowen coalfield, when we provide the coal-handling facilities, and have the coal available, and with the water available at Bowen, and when we have all the raw materials, such as limestone at hand, and so forth, then we will say to private enterprise, "There are all the facilities for you. Go on with the manufacture of iron and steel." That is the only way that we will get the iron and steel works at Bowen.

Mr. COLLINS: Why didn't private enterprise go in for iron and steel works there before the advent of this Government?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: If the hon. gentleman asks me the question without notice to-morrow, I will answer it. (Laughter.)

Coming now to the Main Roads Board, that is another very important matter which has been sidetracked. Where is the reference to the Main Roads Board in the Speech from the Throne? Here we have three competent gentlemen—I believe them to be competent—touring Queensland, and doing excellent work; but the time will soon come when their investigations will end, and they must get to business. Where is the evidence of the actual work being proceeded with? We know that the financial situation has

curbed the whole matter, and the only reference to it in the Speech from the Throne is really a pious hope, and nothing else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are pleased with that.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: In one sense I am pleased, because it means the exit of hon. gentlemen opposite very shortly, but I am sorry for the credit of Queensland that such a thing has happened.

I might briefly refer to the Unemployed Bill, and in reference to that it was amusing and quite encouraging, too, to read the speech made by the hon. member for Toowoomba. Speaking at a gathering of the unemployed, the hon. member said that he had hoped the Government would bring forward the Unemployed Workers Bill, but he thought now that that measure should not be passed because it would throw more men out of employment. (Opposition laughter.) We occasionally get crumbs of satisfaction thrown to us, even by the hon. member for Toowoomba. That is exactly what we said to the Government when the Bill was introduced, and we are glad to get the hon. gentleman's opinion now that the Unemployed Workers Bill is not what he thought it was when it was introduced. Hon. members opposite have been in office for six years, and they introduced the Unemployed Workers Bill, but it was thrown out by the Upper House. Now they have no Upper House to contend with, because it is temperamentally fitted to suit the views of hon. gentlemen opposite, we shall be glad to see what kind of hash they are going to make of the Bill this session. We have been twitted by hon. members opposite with having no constructive policy, but, if the Government had only taken the trouble to listen to the speeches from this side for the last four or five years, they would have seen a lot of wisdom in the suggestions offered. Instead of that, they have preferred to stick to their socialistic doctrines. Although reference is made in the Speech to the Unemployed Workers Bill, I have in front of me the schedule of Bills to be introduced, and after searching it five or six times I cannot find any Unemployed Workers Bill there at all. I see a Slaughtering Act Amendment Bill, and I also see an Insanity Bill. Are either of those the Unemployed Workers Bill? because, if not, I see no reference whatever to it. Is this simply another fake to satisfy the unemployed?

Passing now to the Legislative Council, we on this side hope that the Council is going to be wiped out. If there is any sincerity in the Government, they must bring that measure forward again this year. Year after year they have brought it forward, but they are not going to do it this year. You have to go to the Opposition to find out what the Government are doing, and we can tell you that the Government are not going to pass the Bill this year. If it is introduced, it will be amongst the "slaughtered innocents," and the Government will say that they got short of breath before they got it through.

I see no reference to the Greater Brisbane Bill. We heard last year that it was an absolute necessity, but there is no reference to it here. There is no Initiative and Referendum Bill. What has happened to it? We were told how necessary it was to have that Bill introduced. The Council threw it out in 1919, and now it has been

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sidetracked. What has become of the "Flapper Vote" Bill? These gentlemen are soon to go before their masters, and they know the "flappers" will not help them. The hon. member for Bowen told us that all the wisdom of the centuries was centred in the children of eighteen and nineteen years of age, but now that he has got to face the electors he has suddenly discovered that they have got the wisdom that he spoke of, and that they will exercise it in a way that will not be to his advantage.

The hon. member for Barcoo made reference to the question of interest, and that is an important matter for us to consider. No country can progress with the large rate of interest we have to pay at the present time. It is no use going to those who give us accommodation unless we know how to respect our contracts. The rate of interest will be high in Queensland so long as we fail to satisfy those who lend us the money that their security is all right. Queensland can borrow all right if she pays the price, but we want it to enjoy the same status as we used to have, and we must show that we are part of an Empire which knows what the sanctity of contract means. Therefore, as soon as we take over the reins of government we can reduce, or help to reduce, the rate of interest which is becoming a menace to this country. There is a certain amount of consolation in the fact that we are not raising large sums of money in times when that money would cost us 6½ per cent. If by putting off the raising of loans for twelve months we can re-establish our security and get money for a point or a point and a-half less than at the present time, then Queensland can have some cause for gratification for some of the mistakes that have been made by hon. members opposite.

Mr. PEASE: How can you keep on building railways without money?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Hon. gentlemen opposite seem to think that all they have to do is to go on building railways. I contend that the building of railways is finished for the time being, and we have to make the best use of the railways which we have at our disposal at the present moment, with three exceptions. I have never hesitated to state those exceptions. One is the completion of the North Coast Railway; the second is the building of the Winton-Longreach connection; and the third is the Merinda to Bowen coalfield line.

Mr. STOPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): The hon. member for Oxley devoted a considerable amount of his time trying to defend the statement of the hon. member for Port Curtis that the only solution of the difficulties confronting Queensland is a reduction of wages. The hon. member for Oxley is one of the most far-seeing men on the other side of the House, because he clearly realises that an admission like that going forth to the people, particularly when it is supported by the leader of his party, who is in a position to speak officially for the party, must at least have the effect of making the people look back into past history and see for themselves how these financiers got over their difficulties when a similar problem confronted them in 1902. The hon. member sought to show in the remarks he made on the Mount Morgan question that it was not a matter that could be adjusted by any influence other than the men and the company; yet he recorded his vote the other day in favour of

a motion indicting the Government because they had not amended the Arbitration Court award in order to force back to work men who did not want to go back to work except under the legal award then existing. Can you reconcile the statements he made a few days ago with the statement he has just made, which clearly show that that party recognises that this young and inexperienced member from Port Curtis has unwittingly told the people what the party opposite desired to suppress? I agree with the hon. member for Oxley that the Mount Morgan difficulty is one that can only be arrived at by the two parties to the dispute. I desire to point out to the people of Queensland that to-day we are suffering from the results of a world-wide war madness that has left behind it the natural financial headache, and that the people who would have conscripted the young men of this country and who would have robbed the industries of this country of the necessary manhood to carry them on are to-day confessing in the Federal Parliament that they are unable to meet their obligation to the men who volunteered and went to the war of their own free will.

Mr. KERR: That is not correct.

Mr. STOPFORD: It is correct. I have been to the Soldier Settlement Office of this State on no less than six occasions during the past fortnight to ask for money for a returned soldier who has purchased a property in Mount Morgan, and I have been told that they are held up because they cannot get a definite answer from the Federal Government. During the conscription campaign, hon. members on this side of the House were labelled as disloyal, and were called anything but gentlemen, simply because they pointed out that the truest loyalty to the Empire and to the men who had volunteered for the front was for those who had been left behind to do their duty by seeing that the industrial life of the country was not impaired for those men when they came back. To-day we find that the fathers who sent their sons to the front are confronted with the difficulty of having to stand, like they are doing in Mount Morgan, to try and retain for themselves a fair living wage; and yet every one of those "flag flappers" and patriotic "soolers" who called us disloyal in 1916 and sold their patriotism for 6 per cent. are to-day receiving the war price that they were able to demand for their money; and the only utterance I have ever heard on the question from hon. gentlemen opposite was the utterance by the hon. member for Oxley, who is in closer touch with public opinion than an inexperienced young man like the hon. member for Port Curtis, who has to realise that sooner or later the question is not going to be how much further you can drive the worker, but how long he is going to submit blindly to the loss of his son and to the increased taxation in the form of customs revenue that is imposed upon his class to pay the heavy burden of war debt and taxation as a result of the war. The worker is going to ask this reasonable question: "Why do the nations not realise that the whole trouble confronting the industrial life not only of this country but of every country in the world is the disorganised exchange rate?" He has got a right to demand that these war debts be wiped out, if necessary, to bring the exchange rate back to normal before he is asked to suffer any reduction in wages.

[*Mr. Elphinstone.*

The hon. member for Port Curtis, in commenting on my speech, practically accused me of misrepresenting the position. This young man entered this Chamber with a paper-made reputation that he has not been able to live up to. I remember reading in the "Daily Mail" a statement something like this: "Woothakata has given us Theodore, and Port Curtis has given us Fletcher." (Government laughter.) I am beginning to know and realise Fletcher. There is a picture which you see in any music shop of a little terrier listening to a phonograph. It is labelled "His master's voice." When I read the hon. member's speech the other night, I really thought I was listening to Mr. Boyd, the manager of the Mount Morgan company.

Mr. FLETCHER: Mr. Boyd is a very smart man.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman is right. He is a very smart man, and the longer the hon. member is acquainted with him and the longer Mr. Boyd uses him the greater admiration the hon. member will have for his smartness. I understand Mr. Boyd much better than the hon. gentleman. He is using the hon. gentleman as a tube to speak through in this House. I know Alexander Boyd. Until recently I thought his one ambition was to become the industrial captain of Australia; but to-day I realise that his ambition is greater. He has become Americanised; he not only wants to become the industrial captain of Australia, but he wants to be the political captain as well. The hon. member for Port Curtis having failed as his advocate, Mr. Boyd has adopted American methods, and he has called "Two-gun Jim of Normanby" to his assistance. (Government laughter.) This man has confessed that, at the point of the gun, he is able to hold up Ministers in their offices and demand for his electorate things that he probably knew the electorate should not receive. No doubt, the hon. member who has become "gunman" for Mr. Boyd, when he returns to this House, will support the advocacy of the hon. member for Port Curtis, and Mr. Boyd's wish will be gratified. I will say this about the honourable "Two-gun member for Normanby," that it is usual for gunmen to operate in the hills and the mountains, and I was rather disappointed that the hon. member, when he was doing his "Bill Hart act" the other night, did not go 16 miles further on his journey up into the mountains of Mount Morgan, where 600 of his electors would have been pleased to welcome him, and where out of 600 votes cast he received something like 200 of a majority. Instead of that he thought that he would attack the enemy, and not his friends, and he went to a little place called Gracemere, where the vote cast was eighty-five, and where his position was that of a minority candidate when the poll was declared. It was there that he unloaded certain statements about the Mount Morgan position, to which I will reply later on.

Mr. KING: When he is in the House.

Mr. STOPFORD: On my return from Sydney I was told that the hon. member for Port Curtis had done a terrible thing in attacking me in my absence. I do not regard that as a terrible thing. A man's place is to be in the House. I am not going to attack the hon. member for Normanby. I am simply going to reply to Mr. Boyd's mis-statements that the hon. member for Port Curtis voiced in the speech he delivered here

the other night. The hon. member for Port Curtis not only misstated the case, but in doing so he misquoted what I had said. He stated that I had said that the Mount Morgan Goldmining Company had used harsh treatment towards their returned soldier employees.

Mr. FLETCHER: I did not say that.

Mr. STOPFORD: He practically stated that I said that these men were not reinstated in their employment when they returned.

Mr. FLETCHER: I said that you said that they were dismissed.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. member does not know what he said. What he said was this—

"He said that the 500 men who left had not been reinstated and the company had not honoured its pledges to them. As a matter of fact, only 256 of the men who left Mount Morgan returned to the mine. The company, in addition to those 256 men, put on another 236 returned soldiers from other parts, but when the mine closed down only 151 remained. Some of the others had taken more remunerative jobs in other places, whilst others had gone on the land."

Does the hon. member say that he did not say that?

Mr. FLETCHER: I said that.

Mr. STOPFORD: You just admitted saying that I said they were not reinstated.

Mr. FLETCHER: You said the company had not honoured its pledges because it had put the returned soldiers off.

Mr. STOPFORD: I will tell the hon. gentleman what I did say. I said—

"They received the usual promise from their employers—that, when they returned, their welfare would be in the care of their employers. Yet the other day, for no apparent reason, or convincing reason, the management closed down their mine, dismissed those 500 returned soldiers, and threw them upon the labour market."

Not one statement that I made in that speech was made without due regard to its correctness. When the mine closed

[5.30 p.m.] down, and after negotiations had failed, I approached the Cabinet and asked them to give a rebate on railway freights, in the hope that the company might carry on. When it was made public, a prominent friend of a returned soldier in Mount Morgan wrote and told me that I ought to approach the Federal Government, which had certain responsibilities to returned soldiers, 500 of whom were affected by the closing of Mount Morgan. Now, the Mount Morgan Australian Workers' Union books show that, when the mine closed down, we had between 300 and 400 members of our organisation working in the mine. When we consider that there are a number of other unionists operating in the town, it will be realised that that was no mistake. The hon. member also stated that the wages were very much higher with the 20 per cent. reduction than those which were in operation in Mount Morgan before the mine closed down. As a matter of fact, the minimum wage before the men went to the front was £3 3s. per week, and the 20 per cent. reduction now would bring it to £3 5s. But the value of wages is not the amount a man gets in an envelope, but the commodities which the

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money in the envelope will purchase. If you compare 1914 with 1921, you will find that my statement is in no way erroneous.

The hon. member for Port Curtis also stated that it was no surprise to the Mount Morgan men when the mine was closed down; that they were not stunned, that the people were expecting it, that certain notices had been posted at the works, and the men were expecting a reduction in wages. I stated that the men had gone on their holidays, and that, when they returned, they were stunned to find that their jobs were not waiting for them. The hon. member quoted a notice which was placed on the works in January, three months before the closure took place, but that notice had nothing to do with the position which arose in March. I think I was the first man in Queensland whom Mr. Boyd approached on the question of a conference with the men. He came to me in Brisbane and laid his cards on the table, showing me particularly the very adverse side of things. He stated that it was his intention to call his employees together and to put the case before the court. I advised Mr. Boyd that, no matter what agreement they might arrive at, the matter would eventually have to finish up in the Arbitration Court, and that the fairest and quickest method was to call together the unions operating in Mount Morgan and let them deal with the matter. Mr. Boyd immediately wired—because he had not time to write—to Mount Morgan to his assistant manager, asking him to get in touch with the various unions and to arrange a conference. The conference was held on 30th March. The mine closed down on 25th March, and even the delegates representing the unions never received their notice until the last day before the mine was to be closed down. When the parties met it was not a conference, but something like the co-operative store that my friend opposite insists upon talking about—a store that gave to the men a committee of management, but gave to the manager, who was chairman of the store, the power of veto. When Mr. Boyd went into the conference-room, the first thing he did was to throw down his proposal for a 20 per cent. reduction, and his words were: "Twenty per cent. or nothing."

Mr. FLETCHER: Did he just use those words without any explanation?

Mr. STOPFORD: He explained the position.

Mr. FLETCHER: Did the men understand the economic position in the world?

Mr. STOPFORD: You have not time to think of the economic position in the world in a case like that; you think you are going to be pushed over the edge of the world if you get a reduction of 20 per cent. in wages. The hon. member asked me if it was a fact that the cost of living had dropped 20 per cent. in a certain period. I want to ask the hon. member, as I asked Mr. Boyd, "Who is it that gets any advantage from the reduction in the cost of living first—the man who purchases in the retail store, or the man who purchases from the wholesaler?" It is the man who purchases from the wholesaler every time. Mr. Boyd cannot explain, nor can the hon. member explain, why during the period in which the 20 per cent. reduction obtained, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, who buy wholesale, show

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an increased cost on their production. That is the point—why, in the period they claim the workers' costs have come down, they show that their costs have risen. That is why we ask for an inquiry, not into the figures they prepare, but into figures relating to the justification of their costs. The hon. member did not understand that we did not claim that these figures were wrong or "faked." What I tried to show was that the inquiry which was held was not an inquiry into the cost or the justification for the cost. We claim that the overhead expenses of the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company to-day, when they are selling the commodity that is subject to the fluctuations of the world's market, are practically the same as when they were selling a commodity that had a standard value, and there was plenty of the product: in other words, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company, having one of the richest goldmines in the world, were able to initiate extravagant overhead expenses, and those expenses in a large measure exist to-day. When the company are faced with the difficulty of making ends meet, they take what they believe to be the line of least resistance—that is, they try to chop a bit off their workers' wages. We say that we do not expect industry to accomplish the impossible; we do not say that in an industry which cannot pay wages the employer should be forced to work it; but we say that, before they can justify a reduction in wages, they should meet the workers and go to the court and prove there that their costs have gone up in a legitimate manner like we do.

Mr. FLETCHER: Don't you know that it was impossible to reduce overhead expenses? Their overhead expenses depend on influences over which they have no control.

Mr. STOPFORD: Their overhead expenses are largely of their own creation, and are not due to any other influence at all. The hon. member's speech omitted every main principle that I dealt with in my address. He absolutely refused to touch the main principles, but singled out one or two little things not worthy of notice, and tried to build a case round them. The hon. member, in the first place, did not dispute the fact that the Arbitration Court has power to deal with the case—that the Mount Morgan Company had a case in court and withdrew it. He did not dispute the fact that the minimum rate of wages at Mount Morgan is £4 1s. per week, while in Brisbane it is £4 5s. with four hours' less work. To prove his argument he singled out the fact that I said blucher boots were costing 27s. 6d. per pair. The hon. member to disprove that said, "In the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company's store they are selling blucher boots at 19s. 6d." You can get them for 10s. 6d. per pair. You can get a flannel shirt for 2s. 11d., but you put it on to-night, and you have pneumonia to-morrow night. (Government laughter.) Because you can get those things as stated, it does not prove that that is the price the men pay for them. If the hon. member had studied the question, he would have realised that my argument was that the nature of the work in Mount Morgan was so hard on boots and shirts compared with the work in Brisbane that it did not matter if the boots were 1s. per pair, the Mount Morgan men would use three or four pairs of boots as against the higher paid man working in Brisbane.

The hon. member for Port Curtis disputes the figures I gave as to the calls of the ambulance brigade, and he said very cleverly that he did not intend to go into details on the figures that he quoted. The hon. member said that there were practically 1,800 accidents in Mount Morgan in the period covered by my figures, but he knows that is wrong.

Mr. FLETCHER: Accidents and sickness cases.

Mr. STOPFORD: Quite so. I quoted figures supplied to me by the superintendent of the ambulance brigade.

Mr. FLETCHER: So did I.

Mr. STOPFORD: When at Mount Morgan I asked the superintendent of the ambulance brigade to give me the accident figures as far as the works were concerned; but, as he had not got them recorded separately, he promised to separate them and send them to me in Brisbane. He sent the figures, which I made available to the Press, and also quoted in this House. I was generous to the Mount Morgan Company. I merely quoted the figures to prove that a man working in the Mount Morgan Mine was subject to more danger than a man working in the other industries outside. I placed no blame on the Mount Morgan Gold Mine, because I realise that there is no company in Australia that would be prepared to spend more money to safeguard the lives and limbs of their workers than the Mount Morgan Company. That was my experience there. But the hon. member said that I bunched all the figures, and that he had figures showing 1,800 cases, which he said included sickness as well, and finished up by saying, "As a matter of fact, a close analysis of the position discloses that there are more accidents in the town than at the works."

Mr. FLETCHER: Proportionately.

Mr. STOPFORD: I was very light in dealing with the position, because I credited the Mount Morgan Company with the whole of their 1,700 employees. I gave them credit for all the employees at Marmor and at Iron Island, whose accidents are not recorded at Mount Morgan at all. The hon. member for Fitzroy was able to obtain figures on the subject from the Mines Department, which do not show as many accidents as I stated. That can easily be accounted for, because these are only accidents which are notifiable under the Mining Act, and plenty of the Mount Morgan employees might meet with accidents that are not recorded under the Mining Act. The Mines Department show that for 1920 there were five fatal accidents and twenty-one non-fatal accidents—accidents of a very serious nature, into which inquiries had to be held—as well as 943 recorded accidents. After the hon. gentleman's speech appeared in the Press the secretary of the Australian Workers' Union sent me these figures for the three months of this year, up to the time when the mine closed.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was not dealing with that.

Mr. STOPFORD: I am going to show that the figures I quoted and the average of the accidents this year work out at practically the same. The severe accidents numbered 60 and the slight accidents 345—a total of 405. If you multiply that by four, it will give you a total of 1,620 accidents. I have also a letter from the treasurer of the Mount Morgan Hospital, in which he

states that before the mine closed down the average in-patients of that hospital were forty per day, but, since the accident cases that were in the hospital when the works closed were discharged, and, in spite of the fact that an epidemic of scarlatina had been raging amongst the children, the average dropped down to twenty per day. I intended to show, not the number of accidents but the difference in the risk run by the men in Mount Morgan, who are asked to work for £3 5s. a week, compared with men in healthy occupations and in other parts of the State; and I think I have conclusively proved my case.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Arbitration Court is supposed to take that into consideration.

Mr. STOPFORD: It has never been taken into consideration, for the reason that the company have been able to go in and plead such a poor mouth that the judge has said that, in the interests of the industry, he could not give the men what they were justly entitled to. I have not said one word about the men who died last year from miners' phthisis. There were at least six men who died from miners' phthisis, and on the books of the State Insurance Department there are to-day thirty-eight men in Mount Morgan who are receiving the full benefits under the Act—a further thirty-eight men who are receiving the compassionate grant.

Mr. FLETCHER: I was not disputing that at all.

Mr. STOPFORD: You are not disputing it, but you practically asserted that I was exaggerating the position when, as a matter of fact, I did not exaggerate but underestimated the position. The Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company claim they are conducting an industry that cannot pay more than £3 5s. for the support of a man, his wife, and children. If that industry is going to result in so many men being crippled and injured in health, it would be far better for the State and for Australia if Mount Morgan never opened.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman never attempted in his speech to justify the action of the company; he merely attempted to cloud the issue by selecting one or two little things.

Mr. FLETCHER: How do you compare your statement with the Premier's statement?

Mr. STOPFORD: The Premier made the statement that the offer was a fair one, but he was basing that on the fact that the Government were to give £1,000 a week. I am not going to allow anyone to mix up that £1,000 a week with the case between employer and employee. I told the hon. gentleman that his master, Mr. Boyd, was one of the cleverest industrialists in Australia. That gentleman proved it conclusively in the negotiations, when he cleverly attempted to transfer the fight from one between the employees and himself to one between the Government and the men. Mr. Boyd took good care that his original offer of a 20 per cent. reduction stood irrespective of the wage the man might get in his pay envelope. If the prophecy of the hon. gentleman were fulfilled, and we were to be put out of office in a fortnight, how long would hon. gentlemen—who, in this Chamber, have proclaimed that the only solution of the trouble is a reduction in wages—honour that

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pledge of £1,000 a week? They would repudiate any continuance of it.

Mr. FLETCHER: We have not given any pledge.

Mr. STOPFORD: No, but the Government were giving a pledge. Mr. Boyd would have cleverly transferred the fight, and made it one between the men and the Government in power. The whole position is that the men of Mount Morgan are prepared to work immediately Mr. Boyd is prepared to work the legal rate of wages. Mr. Boyd is fully aware of that also.

Mr. FLETCHER: What about the conspiracy you alleged to exist, in your last speech?

Mr. STOPFORD: Does the hon. gentleman want any more evidence of the conspiracy? He has it in the actions of the whole of the mining industry of Australia, in the whole of the actions of the Federal Government, who are closing down industries such as that at Canungra described by Mr. A. Wienholt, who are responsible for wholesale sacking at Lithgow, at Cockatoo Island, and wherever they carry on their industries, and who are sending round special boards to try and reduce the compensation to soldiers when they cannot get their local doctors to do it. The hon. gentleman asked me to justify the conspiracy. I say it is apparent to anyone who notices the artificial unemployment which exists in Queensland to-day. One of the strongest points of the hon. member for Normanby in his speech at Gracemere was that certain vested interests had refused to invest in Queensland although they had all their plans ready. We know very well that that is not correct—that in every industry they are making a definite attempt to create artificial unemployment because they believe that sooner or later the workers will be compelled by force of circumstances to accept a lower rate than they otherwise would. The hon. gentleman said that my statements regarding contributions to the Mount Morgan ambulance and hospital were wrong. He said that prior to 1914, when trouble took place between the committee of the hospital and the management of the company, the Mount Morgan Company had made handsome donations to the hospital and ambulance. My statement was that they had not contributed either to the ambulance or the hospital. I wired to the treasurer of the Mount Morgan Hospital; and this is his reply—

“Company has only made one cash donation to hospital since 1889. This donation received 6th August, 1903, amounting to £356 14s. 1d., representing subsidy at rate of pound for pound on amount collected from employees and townspeople during that period.

“LAMONT.”

The sender followed that wire with a letter stating that they had made an exhaustive search of the books. I was president of the Mount Morgan Hospital in 1912, and had been connected with it for five years previously. I was on the committee when the change in the timbering system at the mine killed several of my mates. Although the company's officials came to the hospital to tell us what to do, we were able to fire them off the veranda because not one was a subscriber to the hospital. I venture to say that the hon. gentleman's friend, Mr. Boyd, has not contributed one penny to the hospital during the period he has been manager of that mine. I want to explain about that

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penny which occurs in the donation. The hospital got into a very low financial position, and they felt that an appeal to the big company might result in a donation. They made a special appeal, and the company replied that if the men employed in the mine and the townspeople would make a special effort to collect money, they would subsidise it to the extent of £1 for £1. They were so careful not to repudiate their agreement that, when there was an odd penny, they would not make it up to a “bob.” (Laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: It sounds weak.

Mr. STOPFORD: It is very weak, considering that eighteen years ago, when the hospital was in a bad financial position, this company, who send their wounded up there, asked their men to double their contributions for the year, before they would subsidise it £1 for £1. The hon. gentleman inferred that the company had contributed £500 to the ambulance brigade in two years. Nothing of the sort! I definitely state that the Mount Morgan Company contribute nothing. They pay for services rendered. Under the Mining Act, the company are supposed to make provision for the moving of their wounded and killed from off the works. Before the Mount Morgan Ambulance was started, this generous company used to remove them to the hospital in an oil cart.

Mr. FLETCHER: Do you not know they pay £15,000 a year to the State insurance?

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman knows that this Government made them pay that. It was the advocacy of this party which led to that Act being brought in. Does he think the company would pay it otherwise? They did not pay it to any private company. They never paid compensation before we made them; every case was fought in the court.

Mr. FLETCHER: They insured with private companies before that.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman stated that the company insured the workers in private insurance companies before that. I am not here to talk about what the Mount

Morgan Company did with private companies. When I first came to this House, I stated what the Mount Morgan Company did in that direction, and I asked for a better system of accident insurance. Here we have a member of Parliament who affects not to know that we altered the Act to prevent lawyers appearing in cases dealing with injured workers. That was a vital matter for the workers.

Mr. FLETCHER: They were liable, as far back as 1905.

Mr. STOPFORD: The hon. gentleman was an employer of labour, and he had to sign a contract that he would fight all cases for compensation in court, if the insurance company ordered him to do so. I do not want to debate that point with the hon. gentleman, because my opinion has been given in this House, and it is well known. I know a man in Mount Morgan who lost an eye. There was a man employed there to barter with the injured workers, and get them to accept lump sums when they were injured. The man who lost an eye was offered £25 in full settlement, but, because he had someone behind him, he hung out, and eventually obtained £250. Dealing with the ambulance contribution, the hon. gentleman justified

that as a contribution from the Mount Morgan Company. I do not regard it as a contribution at all. Before the ambulance started in Mount Morgan, the injured workers were conveyed to the hospital in a spring cart. The cart was generally used to carry oil to the tramline. If the injured man was too bad to stand the knocking about in the cart, eight men were told off to carry him up in a stretcher, and, as those eight men were longer coming back from the hospital than they were going to it, it was a fairly expensive matter to the Mount Morgan Company. When the ambulance was started, they took the responsibility applying to companies under the Mining Act of conveying their wounded to the hospital. The ambulance also undertook to place in the various ambulance-boxes a full stock of dressings, liniment, etc. These things were never received before. Previously, if a man was injured, they would have to ring up the boss, and see if he had any ambulance dressings in his office. The ambulance brigade replenished all the boxes at a cost of about £90, so when that sum is deducted from the £160, you can see it is more in the nature of a bargain than a gift. Under the scheme, the Mount Morgan Company also claimed three direct representatives on the committee, and, in addition, they claimed a vote for each £1 of the £160 contributed, when electing the workers' representatives. The working men, on an average, contributed £300 a year to the ambulance, for which they received 300 votes, but the Mount Morgan Company had three direct representatives and a block vote of 160 votes, which they used through a proxy, to vote for the other members of the ambulance committee. What sort of a donation do you call that? The company supplied the light and water, and also the ground rent of the ambulance, all of which they collected and paid back again as a donation. That was really the only donation the Mount Morgan Company made to the funds of the institution. If the ambulance did not exist, perhaps the disgraceful conditions would have continued until the unions took charge of affairs, and insisted on proper treatment for the men. We are told that we are only soapbox orators and agitators; but let me tell hon. members opposite that it was the continued efforts of the soapbox orators and agitators that led to the passing of such beneficial legislation as the Workers' Compensation Act. (Hear, hear!) The Workers' Compensation Act was brought in by a Government led by Mr. Kidston, who was a soapbox orator in Rockhampton in the 1891 strike, and he got into Parliament as a result of the efforts of the working classes in various parts of the State. The hon. gentleman misquoted me when he said that I remarked that the average rate of wages at Mount Morgan was £3 per week. I said that a statement was obtained from the men in one department, and they gave sworn evidence to the union representative that their average wage was £5 per week for a period. The hon. gentleman asks why we did not go into court. We went into court in 1919. Regarding industrial awards in Queensland, if the hon. gentleman knew anything about them, he would know that you cannot give evidence about every subject. The judge will only call for the evidence he wants to clear up a certain point. In 1919 we were permitted to put witnesses in the box. A man went with me to Sydney the

other day. He said he would write to me from Newcastle, and he did so. This man soon got employment in Newcastle at 17s. a day, and he was informed by the manager that he would take as many Mount Morgan men as liked to come there. I do not say that Newcastle is better than Mount Morgan to live in, because, as a matter of fact, there are more accidents at Newcastle than at Mount Morgan, and I am quite satisfied that when Mount Morgan starts again, these men will go back there. This is the judgment of Mr. Justice Macnaughton in the case I have just referred to—

"The oral evidence called for the Australian Workers' Union was that of two employees of the company. The first of them, H. J. Ross, is a jigman, who has been employed by the company for five years. He is getting 1s. 5½d. an hour—i.e., 1s. above the minimum per day, and up to the 9th of February last, when the price of copper fell below £100 a ton, got ¾d. an hour more as a war bonus. He has a wife and four children. He produced a 'family budget,' giving the details of his expenditure for the six months ended the 4th of May, 1919. It shows that he spent 6s. per week, or £7 16s. in six months for rent. (This is a low rent for Mount Morgan.) In the purchase of meat he spent £9 16s. during the period, or a weekly sum of 7s. 6d. per week; for bread, £11 14s., or 9s. per week; for groceries, £29 5s., or 12s. 6d. per week; for drapery, etc., £5 8s. 6d. or 4s. 2d. per week; for butter, milk, and vegetables, £11 10s. 1d., this being 2s. 7½d. per week for milk, 5s. per week for butter, and 2s. per week for vegetables; for accident and insurance, £2 12s., or 2s. per week; and for patriotic, hospital, and ambulance contributions, £1 1s. 11d., being 8s. to the hospital, 2s. to the ambulance, and 11s. 11d. to various patriotic appeals; for wood he spent £3 5s., or 2s. 6d. per week. Adding these figures up, for the period under review, his expenditure came to £82 8s. 6d. He spent nothing on amusements; had not taken his family away for a change; said that the amount that he had spent at the butcher's was only enough to provide meat for one meal a day, and that often during the last few days of the fortnight, before his pay became due, he and his family had to forego meat altogether. His earnings were £72 15s. 4d. for the six months in question. But it appears that this was an unusually short half-year for actual work, as not only was there a stoppage for the Christmas holidays for the overhaul of machinery and plant at the works, longer than usual, but there was another such stoppage of several days at Easter, and there was time lost through a strike which entailed a loss of five days. Also the bulk of the statutory holidays fall in this period of the year. In the six months he lost thirty-three days altogether. The result was that, in that time, he went into debt to the extent of £9 13s. 2d., and his total indebtedness is now about £25. In the year 1918, his total earnings were £189, but during that period he was working for three weeks as a shift boss at the rate of £5 per week, and he also worked on several Sundays, for which he was paid double time; in 1917 he earned £152; in 1916,

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£168. He also said that a number of men on the minimum limit were worse off than he was. The other witness was I. C. Breckenridge, employed on the Dwight Lloyd plant. His evidence showed that he was being paid 12s. 8d. per day, and that he had a wife and seven children. During the six months ended the 4th of May he earned £80 13s. 6d. He lost twenty-seven days from the same causes as Ross lost thirty-three. He got into debt to the extent of £20 7s. during that six months. He has a wife and seven children, but he said that if the work was continuous all the time he would just be able to make ends meet on his present wages. His total earnings in 1918 were £182; in 1916 and 1917 he was away from Mount Morgan part of the time working at Lake's Creek, but was paid by the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company £122 8s. 8d. in 1916, and £153 in 1917. Mr. Riordan said he was ready to call a number of witnesses to the same effect if required."

You see that man's contribution for patriotic affairs and hospitals, and, if you look at all the donations, you will see who are the patriots. Suppose we admit that the average wage is £5 per week—that includes the contract miners, whom I do not reckon in this matter at all. I am pleading for a minimum wage. Anyone connected with industrial matters knows that, if you build the foundation properly, the whole structure will rise from it. The organiser and the boss in a room can settle the wages, and no matter how many callings there are in the industry, once the basic wage is fixed at the bottom there is no trouble anywhere else. Regarding a man's working time, if you take all the days he is likely to lose, you will see that he gets three weeks at Christmas, ten days at Easter, and eight days for the saints' days, making thirty-nine days in all. Last year there were five fatal accidents at Mount Morgan. If a man works as a contract miner he may earn £6 a week or more. All the miners knock off when there is a fatal accident, and they do not come back until after the funeral. Some may not come back for two days after, because they drown their sorrow for a couple of days. When this happens, the men on the concentrating plant are sent home owing to a shortage of ore. In one case, Mr. Boyd told a deputation that he was not going to start one section unless all the men were back, so that these men are kept out of work for two days more. Supposing we take it that every man was getting the full wage rate, and you take 20 per cent. off and bring it down to £3 5s., then you take off the three weeks' holiday and the ten days at Easter and the saints' days as well, and there are no fatal accidents, the man himself does not meet with an accident and his wife does not get sick, there is no breakdown of machinery, or anything that may lose him a few days' work, I asked the hon. member for Port Curtis how the man who went to the other side to fight to make the world safe for democracy—how a man with five "kiddies" can rear and support them and bring them up in a way that we Australians demand they should be brought up and carry on on the wages as disclosed by Mount Morgan itself? It is not the fault of the employee at all. Is it a reasonable wage to pay? How can any man—particularly the hon. member for Normanby, who represents some of these men—face these

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people? The hon. member said that I would have to go back to the people of Mount Morgan. I am not afraid of the people of Mount Morgan. I have not been near them because I know they have confidence in me. I know their case, because I have lived with them, and worked with them, and have always been one of them.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him by the Standing Orders.

Mr. LAND (*Balonne*): I beg to move that the hon. member for Mount Morgan be granted an extension of time.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. STOPFORD: I thank the House for the privilege granted to me. I desire to finish this case in this House once and for all. I would never have brought it into the House had it not been one of the indictments in the motion. The hon. member for Normanby states that he has been thirty years connected with the Labour movement. I was in Sydney the other day, and met a relative of my wife, who has been there twenty years, and, in discussing Sydney with him, I found that he knew nothing about the place at all. He walked from his home to his work and from his work to his home, and that was about all that he knew of Sydney. The hon. member for Normanby seems to be much too young to claim that he has been thirty years in the movement. He could never have been with the people, lived with them, felt with them, and knew what they suffered, or he never could have taken the course he has taken. The hon. member for Port Curtis, the other night, stated that the hon. member for Mount Morgan asserted that copper would have to reach £149 before the Brisbane rates are paid. He waved his hand and said that was absolutely erroneous. When I was speaking, I had gone to the trouble of showing how I arrived at that conclusion. The hon. member went on to say that I was wrong in stating that copper was £122 per ton—the highest point reached during the war—and he assured the House that copper reached £169 during the war; and when an interjection was levelled at him and he was asked if it was for copper or for the Mount Morgan Company's product of gold and copper, he said, "Yes." What did the hon. member mean? No copper was sold from Queensland for £169 per ton during the war.

Mr. FLETCHER: It reached £169 per ton.

Mr. STOPFORD: You say that as the advocate of the company. I have worked out that that would mean that the company received £246 per ton for their product. What an enormous price for them to get! Supposing the hon. member was wrong, and that he meant gold as well as copper, and taking the company's balance-sheet, which discloses 14 ounces of gold for the half-year at £5 10s. per ounce, or, in other words, £77, and deducting that, it leaves £92 as the highest point that was reached for copper. I was in a show once, where they were showing some lions, and the showman said, "This is the lion that did this and that," and an old lady, who had paid her money, said, "Which is the one?" "Oh," the showman said, "You pays your money and you takes your choice." (Laughter.) And the hon. member can do the same. I take up the same attitude as the hon. member for Oxley—that talking is not going to remedy the case. When the Mount Morgan Company

are in a position to obey the laws of this State, things will remedy themselves.

Mr. FLETCHER: Your talking has probably had a lot to do with the cause of the trouble.

Mr. STOPFORD: I do not think Mr. Boyd causes much trouble by his talk. He does not talk if he can get anyone else to do it for him. I want to deal with some statements—not in a personal way—made by the hon. member for Normanby at his meeting at Gracemere the other night. He has taken his stand, and it is one I do not agree with. I would rather he had taken the stand when he first felt the impulse three years ago, when he would have left a stronger party than he did the other day, and then I might have perhaps thought more of him. So I have no desire to enter into any personal condemnation of his attitude here to-night. Rather am I prepared to leave him to his electors, who I know will be anxiously waiting for an opportunity of dealing with him when the time comes. The hon. member in his speech attempts to defend the Mount Morgan Company by levelling an accusation against this Government for treating the company badly, and he said he wrote to Mr. Boyd for information. This is how he is reported in the Press—

“STAGGERING FIGURES.

“I will read to you replies that I have received from Mr. Boyd, in order to prove my contention. They are—

What extra income and dividend tax has been paid by your company since 1915 up to the present?—£18,000.

To what extent have increased timber royalties, other than mine props, affected your company?—£2,700.

What do you estimate your company would have saved in its coal bill had a coal lease been granted to you earlier at Baralaba?—£20,000 per annum, if the lease had been granted when we made application at first, and allowing eighteen months for development we would have saved probably £60,000 to £80,000 up to date.

Total amount of extra railway freight paid since 1915?—£82,000.

Total increase in wages since 1915?—£398,000.

“If we added up this extra taxation, increased railway freights, and then allow for the loss occasioned the company through not granting the coal lease earlier, we find that it works out as follows:—Extra income and dividend tax, £18,000; extra timber royalties, £2,740; extra railway freights, £82,000; loss through non-granting of coal lease earlier, say, £75,000; total, £177,740.

“Now, the loss as computed by Mr. Boyd when the mine closed down was £1,680 a week. Had the Government realised its obligations to the community the above amount, £177,740, would have enabled the company to have carried on for over two years, at the present price of copper, without reducing wages one cent. It may be argued, why should the company not have its freights increased and extra taxation to pay? I contend that where an industry depends upon a world's market for its income, over which we have no control, and at the same time has to have its wages regulated

according to the cost of living in the State where it produces its product, is uneconomic.”

The hon. member pointed out that these figures were based on a six-year period during which the company paid to their shareholders something like £1,000,000. He is supposed to represent the farmers, and he is so disgusted with this party that he has gone over to a party who state that, when they get into office, they are going to make the railways pay. He states this Government committed a wrong in asking the company to shoulder a little responsibility, and he very cleverly bunches the figures to make it appear that the added income tax was £18,000, which, for a period of three years, represents an average of £3,000 per annum. Six hundred men left Mount Morgan to go across to the other side to make the world safe for democracy. They went to protect the property of the Mount Morgan Company, because we were told that, if the Germans won, nothing mattered, and that there would be nothing to make life secure or worth living for. The hon. member for Normanby, in giving one reason for indicting the Government, points to the fact that the unionists who were left behind, realising their responsibilities to the men who had gone, had moved the Industrial Court and got increased wages. The Government, realising that in the past the burdens and responsibilities had been placed on the shoulders of those least able to bear them, said that sooner than place the burden on the producer who was struggling on the land, and sooner than place it on the worker who was rearing children—younger children who were placed at a disadvantage owing to the elder sons fighting at the front—sooner than place it on their shoulders, like hon. gentlemen did in 1902, they said, “This company for a period of years has been able to pay £1,000,000, and we are going to force them to bear a share of the cost brought about by the altered conditions.” The hon. member for Normanby had an opportunity, as one of this party, of protesting in the proper place against any burdens imposed by this party, and I must have been pretty deaf, or he must have spoken very weakly, because I do not remember hearing him. He said that had a certain lease been granted of a coal area in 1917, the company would have been able to save money. That was altogether impossible. In computing his figures he makes it appear that had the company got the lease in 1917 they would have been earning a profit from their mine. We find that the Mines Department, when they started to develop their Baralaba property, were exactly six months before they were producing coal for commercial purposes. Mr. Boyd has had his mine for thirteen months, and if he had desired to produce coal for commercial purposes to cheapen his expenditure between the date that he got his lease until the time when the mine was closed down, he had ample time to produce coal had he desired to do so. I dispute the statement of the hon. member for Normanby that the Government in any way harshly treated the Mount Morgan Company. Mr. Boyd ever since I have known him has cried, “Wolf! Wolf!” so often that at last the people are getting heartily sick of his cry. On every occasion that we have gone to the Arbitration Court Mr. Boyd has sworn on oath that the company could not pay any increase in

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wages. When copper was £114 per ton and the wages were somewhere about 1s. 4½d. per hour, and the union asked for an increase to 1s. 6½d. per hour, speaking from memory. Mr. Boyd stated that the increase would mean the closing down of the company's works.

When he wanted the Baralaba coal lease, he made certain suggestions to the Secretary for Mines, which were considered by that gentleman; in other words, in 1917, through the activity of the hon. member for Fitzroy, Baralaba was brought under the notice both of the company and of the Government. At that time, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company were casting about to [7.30 p.m.] get a cheaper class of fuel. They were bringing their fuel from Blair Athol, a distance of 243 miles, and paying about 11s. 6d. per ton railway freight, and landing the coal at Mount Morgan at a cost of about 22s. per ton. To show that the Government treated the company fairly in the matter of freight rates, I will read the following letter:—

“Mount Morgan,  
18th September, 1917.

“Dawson Valley Coal.

“Dear Sir,—Further in the matter of a reasonable freight rate on coal from Baralaba to Mount Morgan, I have now much pleasure in furnishing additional particulars and comparisons with other existing rates.

“I admit that the present freight from Blair Athol is an extremely low one, and that it would be unfair on my part to expect the Commissioner to give a rate from Baralaba to Mount Morgan on the proportionate mile basis. Long-distance haulage up to a certain point is undoubtedly more economical from a railway man's point of view, but in asking the Commissioner to concede a freight rate based proportionately on the mileage of the present one from Bluff to Rockhampton. I think I am only asking for a fair deal.

“(Sgd.) A. A. BOYD,  
“General Manager.”

The freight rate was admitted by the general manager of the company in 1917 not to be the cause of any increased cost in his fuel, but he was searching about, as any reasonable man would, to get something cheaper; and, were it not for methods like that, the Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company would have closed years ago. It is their scientific method of cheapening costs that has enabled them to carry on to the point they have reached to-day. The Secretary for Mines entered into an agreement with Mr. Boyd, under which the Government were to try and procure cheap coal if the Mount Morgan Company would jointly bear the expense of taking out a parcel of coal from the old Dunstan shaft on the Dawson River. Mr. Boyd was entrusted with the duty of taking out that parcel, and he took out 200 tons. He was impressed with his first test, and he made two propositions to the Minister—one, that he should lease the area and work it, giving to the Government so many tons of coal at the small rate of 8s. 6d. per ton and holding the mine for ten years, when the Government could take it back at a price, allowing for depreciation. The alternative proposal was that the Government should work the mine as a Government mine and agree to supply Mr. Boyd with at least 25,000 tons

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of coal at a price to be determined by the Government. The Government, after exhaustive borings and carrying out the initial expense of determining the quantity of coal available, sunk the shaft, and in six months produced coal. But they sunk the shaft on a disturbed area, and then Mr. Boyd wrote to the Secretary for Mines and withdrew his offer. This is the letter he wrote—

“Mount Morgan,  
4th September, 1917.  
“Dawson Valley Coal.

“Dear Sir,—Since our conversation I have further looked into the Dunstan coal proposition, and find that there is evidence of which I was not formerly in possession pointing to the coal being somewhat disturbed around area. This is not a very serious matter, but is of sufficient import to affect costs. I would, therefore, ask you, in considering the second proposal, to leave the question of 8s. 6d. per ton until I see you in Brisbane.

“Yours faithfully,  
“(Sgd.) A. A. BOYD,  
“General Manager.”

As the Government developed their mine, they made a proposition to Mr. Boyd to haul his coal at 5s. 6d. per ton for a distance of 69 miles. I want to show how fair those two proposals were—the proposal with regard to freight rates—namely, 11s. 6d. per ton from Blair Athol, 243 miles distant, the freight to-day being 12s. 9d. per ton; and the proposal to carry coal from Baralaba, a distance of 69 miles, at 5s. 6d. per ton. The rate fixed by the present Premier to-day in response to the request of myself and Mr. Boyd is 6s. per ton. In connection with the Government mine at the Styx River from which coal is sent to Rockhampton, a distance of 81 miles, the rate is 10s. 9d. per ton. The Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company are able to bring their coal 69 miles at a rate of 6s. per ton. I claim that the Government, when they made those offers, showed that they were fully seized with the difficulties of the company, and were prepared to assist them in every possible way.

Now, as to the agreement. The Secretary for Mines agreed to open up Baralaba, and asked Mr. Jackson, Chief Engineer of the Mines Department, at what cost they could afford to sell the coal to the Mount Morgan Company. This is the report Mr. Jackson made—

“Brisbane, 16th October, 1917.

“Memo. for the Under Secretary for Mines.

“Re Price of Dawson Coal Delivered Mount Morgan.

“Referring to the hon. the Minister's request for information re the above,

“The present selling price of coal from all Central district collieries is 12s. 6d. per ton. I think coal from a seam at Dawson should be produced and sold at the same price, although the Dawson conditions are as yet undetermined. The Railway Department, I understand, will haul coal from Dawson to Mount Morgan for 5s. 6d. per ton; which, added to 12s. 6d., brings the price of Dawson coal delivered at Mount Morgan to 18s. per ton. Any lesser price than 18s. would have to be obtained by a reduction of the railway freight.

“(Sgd.) STATE MINING ENGINEER.”

The Cabinet, which is accused of doing such a lot to block the Mount Morgan Company, made the company an offer to land that coal on the Mount Morgan Company's works for 16s. per ton—2s. less than their own expert told them was a reasonable price, based upon the ruling price in other parts of the State, and taking into consideration the very low railage charge of 5s. 6d. per ton. This was submitted to Mr. Boyd, who refused it in the following letter:—

"125 William street, Melbourne,

"12th November, 1917.

"Dear Sir,—I thank you for your telegram, advising that your department would be prepared to supply Dawson coal, when available, at 16s. 6d. per ton, and now confirm my wire of even date, reading as follows:—

Your wire re supply Dawson coal, price not acceptable, greatly disappointed.

"As indicated in the above, I am very disappointed at the result, and thought that you would have been able to quote a price not higher than my limit of 14s. per ton delivered at the summit, Mount Morgan. However, I thank you for the information, as it will now enable me to proceed with arrangements for future supplies.

"Yours faithfully,

"(Sgd.) A. A. BOYD,  
"General Manager."

Time does not permit me to deal with the different phases of this matter. Probably, in the debate on the Financial Statement, I shall have an opportunity of going further into it. Since I have occupied the position of member for Mount Morgan, I have taken the stand that the company cannot progress without the town and the workmen progressing, as they are so wrapped up with each other.

The hon. member for Normanby's statement with regard to the timber royalties is absolutely unfounded. He charges the Government with having placed increased timber royalties on the company, when he should know that his statement is absolutely wrong, so far as mining timber is concerned. The regulations under which the price of mining timber is fixed were settled by Mr. Macartney, when Secretary for Public Lands, in 1912. The prices for mining props of 9 inches to 15 inches were fixed at 1d. to 4d. each, according to the distance from the railway the teamster had to come. If he had a long way to go, and could only make one trip a day, it would be 1d.; if he could make two or three trips a day, it would be 4d. But the Forestry Branch came into existence, and reforestation became important to the State. The Mount Morgan Company had destroyed more timber than any other company in the State in the days when they were able to pay royalty, but the Governments of the day neglected to charge them for it. The company burnt some of the finest timber there was in the State. They always paid a flat rate of 1d., no matter where the timber was situated. When the Director of Forestry found that out, he only sought to give effect to the regulation framed by Mr. Macartney, and Mr. Boyd immediately protested. I supported his protest, and pointed out to the then Premier, Mr. Ryan, that the industry was in such a state that it would be ruined if it were harassed. Mr.

Ryan issued orders for the suspension of the regulation for six months. When the six months were up, I, supported by other Central Queensland members, got it extended to March. I interviewed the Director of Forestry to-day, and he informed me that these duties have never been imposed since we got the extension to March. Not only that, but Mr. Boyd approached him here, and made an effort to get some concessions to enable them to carry on the leaching process. They have a leaching process in America, which enables them to treat profitably 1 per cent. copper ore. They have endeavoured to solve the difficulties of treatment of Mount Morgan ore, and I secured from the Secretary for Lands, at a small rental of £3 10s. a year, a large area of our salt lands at Port Alma. They were given permission to run a pipe line across to Casuarina Island. Mr. Boyd, unfortunately, was unable to give effect to his scheme. But it shows conclusively that, whenever the company have submitted any reasonable suggestion to this Government, it has not been refused. The position of the company to-day is no more the result of harsh treatment by this Government than it is the result of harsh treatment from Mr. Boyd himself.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MACGREGOR (*Merthyr*): In speaking to the Address in Reply, I also would like to express the pleasure I felt in hearing a real and worthy representative of His Majesty delivering a speech—an able member of an able family, who have given ungrudgingly in the service of the Empire, and who himself is an illustrious son of the Empire; one who will, I might respectfully say, add to his laurels in his tenure of office as Governor in Queensland. But, while listening to the deliverance of the Speech, very different feelings were aroused by listening to the matter which was delivered by His Excellency. One, of course, knows that he is not responsible for the Speech—that it is the concoction of his advisers. One can imagine him adapting Shakespeare, and saying, "A poor thing, but not mine own," and delivering it as the representative of His Majesty. Amongst those feelings was one of comfort, to think that it was the last effort of this Government, and also in noticing that it was an improvement on a previous production—that awful production which made most of us disturbed in our loyalty, and which would rapidly breed anarchists.

In the Speech one notes the absence of any reference to the delegation, the stock vituperation of the Socialists. One asks oneself, "Why was that?" After the mutilation of facts, and the gross misrepresentation which passed for argument about the delegation, one wondered why, with a chance like this, it was not referred to. The only conclusion one could come to was that even this Government had not the effrontery to put those misrepresentations into the mouth of a man who knew all about the business, who was in London himself at the time, who is an able financier, and who, no doubt, knew the proceedings from A to Z. In reading the Speech, one was reminded of a wonderful deliverance we had last session—the Financial Statement. The same "potentialities" and "possibilities" are referred to. We had a gem of a sentence. It was said that we have "a heritage whose potentialities . . .

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must eventually reflect in the prosperity of its citizens its own superb and illimitable possibilities." The writer of that must have been—as Mr. Disraeli once said about Mr. Gladstone—"intoxicated with the exuberance of his own verbosity." (Laughter.) You find the same wonderful "potentialities" and "possibilities" as the hon. member for Oxley said, "floating about like bees sipping at the flower of hope." As the Italian poet has it, "Live in hope and die in despair." To change the metaphor, it reminds one very much of a definition given by an Attorney-General of this State—a real Attorney-General; one who honoured the office during his tenure of it. He said that it reminded him of a bush road—a road which began somewhere, wandered everywhere, and ended nowhere. The only difference about this is that it ends in a morass of Bills. I notice there is to be a Slaughtering Act Amendment Bill. If I might make a suggestion, could we not have that Bill brought in with a schedule containing all the other Bills, and have a section providing that "All these Bills shall be slaughtered." It would be no loss to the country, and a great deal of time would be saved. I notice also that there are three Bills referring to the courts—a Supreme Court Act Amendment Bill, a Magistrates' Courts Bill, and a Judges' Retirement Bill. It would be interesting to know who is demanding this reform, how it is that this reform has been included in a programme of Bills, and if anyone is demanding it, what reasons they are giving for its necessity. We have never heard any request from the public, and, when one looks round the department, and fancies he might find a reason there, he is unable to do so. We have an unqualified head of the department, and an unqualified Under Secretary, who know as much about the law and the procedure in the courts as a platypus does about the theory of relativity. After the scandal of the exposure in connection with the redistribution of seats, who would entrust them with any delicate responsibility? I would not. If you go lower than the head and Under Secretary, do you find anyone in the department who might be entrusted with this work? Certainly not.

There is not anyone who has had five minutes' independent practice—who has ever practised otherwise than under the shield of the Government and the large powers of the Government. Who, then, is suggesting this reform, and what are the grounds for it? Have we had a commission inquiring into the need for reform, and pointing out the abuses that require remedying? We know that in New South Wales, where there is a Caucus Government, they also are contemplating some law reform. They have appointed a gentleman whose legal attainments and juristic knowledge have earned for him the respect of Australia. Before legislation is to be introduced there Professor Peden, whose name is honoured in Australia among lawyers, has been commissioned to inquire into the matter. We know that New South Wales is rather behind the other States. They have not a Judicature Act. But, no doubt, there are other matters which will be brought within Professor Peden's inquiry. There are matters which, when you get to know them, make you wonder whether the Department of Justice is being administered any better than other well-known departments which can be criticised by business men, and which have been severely criticised in this House.

[Mr. Macgregor.]

One matter came to my notice the other day which shows unfair treatment of a very fine officer. I refer to the late Crown Prosecutor of District Courts, the Hon. J. G. Drake, who has held in this State a commission since 1910. In 1916 he began to be worried and annoyed with notices. There was a "Gazette" notice that he was to be retired on account of having reached the age limit. He wrote and pointed out that he was not a public servant and did not come under the provisions of the Public Service Act. No notice was taken of his letter, and he was treated as if he had been retired. Executive minutes were sent to him authorising him to sign indictments and to appear in court as Crown Prosecutor. Hon. members know that the office of Crown Prosecutor is a very important and very responsible one, in which an officer has to decide on the evidence before him whether or not he will institute a prosecution. The judging of the weight of evidence and the admissibility of evidence is a matter which requires training and practice. Where the Crown Prosecutor does not file a bill he has to send notification of the fact along with his reasons to the Attorney-General, who is supposed to decide whether the bill should or should not be filed. In the present state of things, can we get any decision that anyone could rely upon, with an unqualified man in the position of Attorney-General? Mr. Drake saw the late Hon. T. J. Ryan, who recognised his position and had the minute cancelled for some time, but through the dilatoriness of the department it was not passed until some time after the commission had lapsed. These minutes came to him to protect him in case someone challenged his prosecution on account of his commission having lapsed. This went on from year to year and he could not get any satisfaction. Last year he got notices from month to month: then two or three months would be skipped and he would get a retrospective notice; until on 2nd December last—the last day on which the Lieutenant-Governor was in office—a few Executive minutes were rushed through and he was retired as from the 31st of that month. He was given about twenty-eight days' notice after eleven years' honourable service, with not a stain on his record—a very capable man in his profession, and one who had occasionally filled the office of acting District Court judge. In addition to that, his salary last year was voted for the whole year up to 30th June, 1921, but he was bundled out at the end of December. He recognises that his commission was "during pleasure." But it is an understood thing in all decent Governments and all decent communities that that pleasure will never be exercised unless there is necessity by reason of mental or moral disqualification. In his case there was nothing of the kind. I say deliberately it was a case of vindictiveness for some reason or another. That is one case in which one gets a little light on the doings of this department—maybe through ignorance. Undoubtedly it was ignorance when this thing started first, because they showed their hand. Although Mr. Drake pointed out that they were doing him a great injustice by publishing in the "Gazette" that he was retired on account of having reached the age limit, they took no notice, but gave it out to the Press that he was retired on account of having reached the age limit. This was at a time when he was in full possession of all his faculties, physical and mental.

Another thing we notice in the Speech is the absence of any real attempt to deal with the industrial problem and the present unemployment. Here you have again the bee sipping at the flower: "Oh, yes, there is unemployment, but we are going to pass an Unemployment Insurance Bill, and you will be all right." The patient is in a burning fever, but they pat his head and say, "We will get you some quack medicine by and by, and you will be all right. Don't bother." That is the only treatment given in regard to the most pressing question of all. What could one expect, especially from this Government—which misnames itself a Labour Government? We know they are not even a Socialist Government, in the best sense of the word "socialist." We often read socialist writers who carry one away by the purity of their aims and of their language. You really wish the things they portray could be true, but you know it is utterly impracticable—that it is a case of the dreamer dealing with a perfect world in which no laws would be necessary. These people are neither Labour men nor socialists; they are a sort of a mixture of the whole lot. Their arguments consist of a welter and chaos of economic fallacies which you get on the honest Labour side, but unjust and unfair because they are biased, ignorant, class-conscious, and mixed with the impossible dreams of revolutionary visionaries. It is impossible to tackle their arguments. The view that is put forward to the public is that we are a class-conscious race, and that we on this side are the oppressors.

We know that this Government came in, not as humble men striving to do their very best for the whole of the State, but as an exulting political Prussian army, roaring out the name of the conqueror. They had their doctrines, which they did not conceal. They said they were going to "search [8 p.m.] the pockets of the capitalists," and that they were going to "bleed them white" with confiscatory death duties. They had a "Hymn of Hate," and I need only quote one line of it—"We like to hear the pastoralists squeal." Fancy a deliverance of that kind coming from the Government of a big State! They have never withdrawn that expression, or said that they were sorry for using it, nor have they said that they do not agree with it. In fact, their actions show that they still believe in statements of that kind.

When we know the truth about the meat contracts we will see how the meat companies were forced to enter into those contracts with the aid of the bludgeon of the Sugar Acquisition Act on the table. Some day we will hear all about those contracts. The fact remains that this Government came in like a conquering army. They told their followers that they were going to overthrow the capitalistic oppressors, and all that sort of thing. I deplore all that. The working men, however, are beginning to think for themselves. There are some honest men amongst the working classes—in fact, 60 per cent. or 70 per cent. of them are perfectly honest. (Government laughter.) I do not include any member on the Government side in that calculation. Apparently the Government and their followers are preparing for an election at an early date, because they are filling "Hansard" with material for propaganda work. Let us see if we on this side cannot also put a little into "Hansard." We, at any rate, will be quite honest

about it. Some time ago attention was called to a rather interesting deliverance, and the writer who called attention to it said he was very much inclined to give prizes both to the socialists and the employers or anyone else who could guess the nearest to its authorship and the time of its production. It was a long document. There was one very interesting part of it, which reads as follows:—

"The most important duty enacted by reason of all national government is undoubtedly that of watching the effect of the natural changes thus operated upon whole populations, in order that, having ascertained the nature of the new ideas which have actually created new imperative wants, the laws and regulations may be so modified in time as to maintain political equilibrium. The performance of that important duty requires that rulers should possess three qualities essential to sound legislation—

- (1) A knowledge of the age they live in;
- (2) Sagacity to discriminate right from wrong;
- (3) Impartiality to act with justice from a national point of view only."

That was from a Labour paper in 1834, and the conditions are not very different to-day from what they were then. Talking of the Labour Convention of 1920, The "Standard" says—

"For this assemblage of the political and industrial organisations of the workers is the real Parliament of Labour; it is the body that promulgates Labour's platform, and advises and instructs the Parliamentary representatives in the State Parliament. In the final analysis the Labour Convention is the governing force of Labour in politics. It is the master's voice that, for good or ill, directs and controls the workers' political machine."

But its regulation of production and distribution is tragic, and it must be said that it is for ill only that the master's voice is raised. No real progress has been made, but rather retrogression, for the problem is essentially the same that confronts us to-day, though under different conditions, and the anonymous writer of 1834 had a larger and truer conception of it than any that can be gained from most of the modern socialist writers, who seem somewhat lost in details, phrases, and formulas.

Mr. BRENNAN: I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member in order in reading his speech?

The SPEAKER: I understood the hon. member was merely quoting extracts.

Mr. MACGREGOR: In the final analysis the Labour Convention controls the workers' political machine. There can be no doubt about that. They propose the nationalisation of all the means of production, distribution, and exchange. In 1834 they had a far truer conception of the problems to be dealt with, and their cure, than could be gained by following any socialistic writings. They dealt quite differently then to the catch cries of the present time. In 1834 they realised the problems that arose from the incessant desire of man to change his environment. They recognised the changing conditions. They recognised then that a man has two great objects. He has the world of nature

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beside him, both animate and inanimate. He also has his fellow-men. They are the two great conditions of his environment. With nature animate and inanimate, he can take it and plan it and remodel it in his own way. But it is different with his fellow-men. He is a very different problem, because the difficulty arises from a man's dual nature—man as an individual and man in his social relations—and they are quite distinct. It is an extraordinary thing that these two characteristics are so evenly balanced and so marked that one will not give way to the other. As a social animal a man must live socially. His idea is to develop in society. It is only by his association in society that he can develop and conquer his environment. It is only as an individual, and through his belief in individualism, that man can be properly developed. The problem is to reconcile those two things and give fairplay to each and to allow fairplay to both characteristics of our nature. The extremist does not give any fairplay at all. The socialist, the neo-socialist, the guild socialist, the syndicalist, and all the others whatever their fancy names, all believe in subjection of the other side. The Opposition believes in individualism and believes in giving fairplay. The real idea of the Opposition is that these things cannot be reconciled unless you give fairplay and fair scope to both sides. It is the nature of man which cannot be conquered. There is one solution of the problem. While waiting for the man to develop and become more perfect, the conditions of the socialist are quite easy if you can postulate a perfect man. But we cannot get a perfect man. We have to deal with men as they are in the present world. We have to deal with men in all their stragglings, strivings, ignorance, and shortcomings; I am speaking of the whole of us now, and I say that that is the sort of man we have to deal with. The general solution hitherto has been a matter of compromise. Some give way on one side and some on the other. Such a compromise, of course, can only be temporary because the conditions are always changing; knowledge is always increasing, and standards are always altering, so there must be a revision of the compromise from time to time. But let us have a compromise to start with, and wait for the time when it is necessary to revise it.

The other solution which has been pressed and insisted on is the solution of nationalisation, class consciousness, class war, and all those things that do not appeal to the thinking man. Looking at it dispassionately we cannot come to any other conclusion than that the policy of hon. members opposite does not produce social peace or industrial peace between the classes. Instead of having class hatred, or class conscious hate, we should have the doctrine of love; and, instead of striving discord, we should have spontaneous concord, and let each perform his work for the benefit of the other. Instead of having the economic fallacies which have been put forward in the past, the only way to make progress in human society is to have an educative movement, and honourable men will confine themselves to two essentials. We want men who have a thorough knowledge of the condition of industry—men who will inculcate economic verities in all the students of economy. We do not want the arguments of the syndicalist, the socialist, or

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the trades unionist, or whatever he is, applied to the conditions of affairs as they exist to-day. This party has continuously pointed out the fallacies of hon. members opposite, and we have made suggestions which are honest attempts to settle industrial problems. Sir Lynden Macassey, the writer I just quoted, did good work for the socialists with his writings during the war, and eventually he was appointed Director of Labour in London. He was a K.C. and LL.D., and he met the workers for a time on their own ground. He pointed out to them that abstract arguments and orthodox economics did not lead very far, because the worker did not understand them. You find one trade union using a word or an economic phrase with one meaning, and another trade union using the same economic term with a different meaning altogether. He found it was hopeless, and he said that it generally resulted in the union secretary or somebody quoting a slab of Karl Marx, and the result was confusing. With his knowledge of workshop conditions and the commercial side, he was able to draw illustrations from the shop to show the men that they were wrong. They accepted his proposals, and the industry went on smoothly. He points out three or four pernicious fallacies which are very widespread. The one to which he gave the chief place is that the workers insist that an industry can pay all the money necessary to carry out their aspirations, and the money that became necessary because of shortened hours, improved conditions, higher wages, and everything of that sort. He could not persuade them to the contrary, and the only way was to take the books of the shop and show them what the establishment would have to bear because of what they wanted to put on it. Then, when they were driven into a corner, they said, "Why can't he raise his prices?" Then he had to argue with them on that, and was able to satisfy them on that, showing that the increased cost meant reducing the area of the market and perhaps losing the market they had immediately around them, which meant curtailment of employment and undermining the standard rate of wages. He pointed out that it had become the fashion to raise wages to meet the increased cost of living, and as soon as you got an increase the cost of living rose, and so created a further demand for further wages; and so it created the "vicious circle," as it is known to economists, of wages forcing up prices and prices forcing up wages. The workers' contention on that was that the increased prices were the result of profiteering. At that time it was very difficult to find an answer, because they were dealing with war conditions. High wages were given to the workers to meet the increased cost of living, simply because the Government had to get munitions, and they did not care what they paid for them. They had to pay for them with borrowed money, and the money had to be paid again. The worker only saw the very high wages and the generous conditions, and could not argue from the special case of munitions for war purposes to an industry existing for commercial purposes. Then he pointed out that the workers honestly believed that, if they restricted the output, they would prevent unemployment and keep up the price of their own work. He had no answer to that in England because it was so general, but he was able to give American examples where the restriction of output is taboo, and is not advocated by any

worker. He was able to show that in America, where there was increased production, there was a lowering in the cost per unit of production, and there was a larger fund for division between employer and employee. He was able to show that the universal experience in America is that, where the employer has a chance to provide such a fund for the employee, it is his wish to do so, because he knows that it is to his own advantage, and in the American spirit of co-operation which exists in that country. He showed the worker that increased production was in his own interest. He showed the fallacies underlying restricted production. He dealt with co-operation, and pointed out the misunderstanding that exists. He was a man who fought the workers' battle as dispassionately as he fought the employers' battle if there was any battle. He said that the three essentials in industry were contentment, co-operation, and production. Contentment, he said, depended on—

“(1) Security of employment; (2) a voice in fixing the conditions of employment; (3) remuneration and fair division of profits; (4) working hours; (5) prevention of profiteering; (6) housing; (7) economic education; (8) opportunity to rise.”

Co-operation depended on—

“(1) Elimination of suspicion; (2) creation of confidence between employer and employed; (3) recognition of their mutual community of interest; (4) machinery for facilitating co-operation.”

Production depended upon—

“(1) Economic education; (2) modernisation by employers of their methods; (3) repudiation by labour of limitations on output and of demarcation restrictions; (4) a progressive national trade policy.”

We have not got that here yet. He was very interesting on a modernisation of methods. There is a great gulf between individual conditions in England and in America. England will not allow a division of operations unless a skilled man is put in charge of each, and paid a skilled man's wages. In America, according to Foster Fraser, there are 174 operations in the making of a boot, which means that, whether workers are skilled or not, when they have acquired the knowledge necessary to handle the machinery, they get the same wages right through. With more output we can secure better conditions for the employer and the employee; a larger wage fund for division between them.

Mr. COLLINS: There are 5,000,000 unemployed in the United States of America with all their improved methods of production.

Mr. MACGREGOR: About two years ago, a friend of mine, the Trade Commissioner for Australia, had a very interesting conversation with Mr. Gompers, the American Labour leader. He lectured in America on labour conditions in Australia and referred to the various Arbitration Acts and Arbitration Courts, without taking sides, and explained the Commonwealth and the State legislation on the subject. He noticed Mr. Gompers in the audience, and at the close of the address, Mr. Gompers came up to him and said, “I have been very interested in your address. About twenty years ago, there was a young optimist from New Zealand who went

through here. He claimed to have found a solution of all industrial troubles, and said that arbitration was to be the thing. I shook my head and told him he would have to find a lot more than arbitration. I can see from what you have said that you have not conquered it yet.” There is no doubt that we have not, because of the natural and inevitable restrictions.

Something has been said about the Arbitration Court. I think it must be kept for some time, if only as a guarantee of the good faith of the employer. I think it is one of the most remarkable instances in the history of this State of the good faith of the employer. The Arbitration Court has been nothing more than the employer saying to his employees, “Here is my pocket; you can take whatever the man on the bench says you ought to take out of it.” That is the position. What better evidence of good faith could you have than that? If it is to be removed, it is to be removed for something better, and hon. gentlemen will probably be asked to consider whether Whitley councils will be better; whether there is not a lack of application in the awards of the Arbitration Court; whether, in dealing with industries generally, the awards do not press too hard on some establishments in those industries. If you gave an award for the whole of a trade, how are you going to look after the small, struggling establishments? The stock argument—it is a very harsh and cruel one—is, “If an industry cannot pay, let it die.” That is where progress is hindered. We want to encourage the struggling man and help him along. The general awards play into the hands of the big concerns and produce rings and combinations, against which we all protest. We would have to consider whether we cannot have something like the Whitley councils to consider the needs and the position of each establishment and each industry. We have a Queenslander who, after holding a position as liaison officer under the British Government, during which time he had to deal with Whitley councils in industries and the settlement of industrial problems, has returned to this State, and he has written in a Rockhampton paper a very interesting account of his work. I hope we shall hear little more of this class-hatred doctrine. I appeal to hon. members opposite to see if there is not something better. Do not let our deliberations be marked by class consciousness on one side and bickering on the other. I have attacked this kind of thing because it is necessary to attack it—because it is ignorance in the last result. Let our motto be: “Come, let us reason together,” and see if we cannot help Queensland to prosper. I recognise that this appeal is mostly directed to members on this side, because it is very pleasant to know that we shall not have an opportunity very much longer of calling the other side into deliberation.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): I wish to congratulate the mover and seconder of the Address in Reply. Hon. members opposite have attempted to condemn and belittle this Government right throughout this debate. In one or two instances credit was given to this Government where credit was due, but the exceptions were very few. It has been mostly a continuous stream of condemnation by hon. members opposite. When they are addressing an audience of their own supporters or addressing the National Democratic Council outside this Chamber, they

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speak with an open mind and with an open heart, as the hon. member for Windsor did the other night. He admitted at a National Democratic Council gathering that the Government had difficulties to face, and that any new Government coming in to take the place of this Government would have exactly the same difficulties to face. Addresses under those circumstances very often get home more forcibly, as the speaker is off his guard. I quote an extract of the hon. member's speech—

"Any Government that takes over the reins of office will have to face a most difficult situation. The revenue during the past year from retrospective reuts obtained under the Land Act Amendment Bill, will, of course, not be received during the present year. There is also a considerable falling off in railway revenue, and what the decrease all-round in taxation for the current year will be no one can tell, but that it will be very considerable goes without saying. Added to this will be the higher interest costs, which will have to be met, and Treasury bills and loans falling due; and the limits of taxation have been undoubtedly reached."

He admits candidly that the Government are faced with an economic crisis that is existing not only in Australia but throughout the world. Yet, in this Chamber, in discussing the position of the State generally, we find hon. members opposite misrepresenting the case in "Hansard," so that it will go forth to many of the electors in Queensland and be starred in headlines through the Press and go to the people in that form. It is nothing short of scandalous that the law should allow members to make indiscriminate statements similar to what have been made by hon. members opposite throughout this debate. It is to be hoped that some statesman will introduce a Bill something along the lines of the Defamation Act, whereby newspapers and members will have a certain amount of restriction placed upon them as regards misstatements in this Chamber.

Hon. members on this side have [9.30 p.m.] dealt with the administration and legislation of the Government in a fair and equitable manner, but fair criticism cannot be said to have come from the Opposition benches. It reminds one of Bernard Shaw's statements in his play, "Major Barbara," in which he referred to the House of Lords as "a mere babble shop." That is what Opposition members are bringing this Chamber to—"a mere babble shop"—instead of making true statements and offering honest criticism of the Government. I do not object to honest criticism, but I do object to dishonest criticism and dishonest statements.

Right through the debate hon. members opposite have touched on the few instances of State enterprise conducted by the Government, which, in the embryo stage, like private enterprises outside, show small prospect of profit: but they have evaded every administrative measure that has benefited the farmers as well as the industrial section of the people. The Government cater for all sections of the community. We have not had one word of commendation of the Government from hon. members opposite in regard to their action in bringing in the Regulation of Sugar Cane Prices Bill, which has resulted in giving millions of pounds to the sugar-growers and making the sugar industry a

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white industry. We have the so-called farmers' representatives opposite condemning the State Produce Agency, which was established to assist the farmers of the State and to help them to overcome the exploitation of the middleman. Mistakes have inevitably occurred, but they will be rectified in future. The fact remains that we have handled farmers' produce at a lower rate than private agencies have done, and, as the agency grows, we shall be able to cater more successfully for the farmers. The mistakes which have been made will be an object-lesson to the Government, enabling them to safeguard the interests of the farmers in future.

Another measure which has been a boon to small settlers in Queensland is the Advances to Settlers Act, but every hon. member opposite has avoided touching on that measure. Through that Act hundreds of farmers have received assistance which has enabled them to improve their farms and to bring them to a productive and successful condition.

Another administrative action of the Government worth mentioning is the providing of facilities for school children in out-back places. The expenditure for schools in country districts by this Government compares more than favourably with that of any other Government in the history of Queensland. Itinerant teachers are sent to farms in the outlying portions of the State where it is impossible to get sufficient children together to warrant the erection of a school.

A great deal has been said about the lack of interest on the part of the Government in the destruction of prickly-pear. I have had conversations with the Secretary for Public Lands, and I find that he is giving assistance wherever possible to cope with this pest. All Governments prior to the Labour Government—and the Labour Government also—have recognised the fact that to attempt to eradicate this pest with a man and a hoe would be financially impossible. We have to depend upon science to cope with it, and we are on the road to success. We read recently that one of our professors has introduced certain fungi and insects from South America and Africa with a view to effectively using them for the destruction of the pear in Queensland. The Government are paying a quota of the expense of the investigations, and it is to be earnestly hoped that very beneficial results will accrue in the near future.

I would refer to the Pure Seeds Act which the Government have passed; also to the wheat pool legislation, and the guarantee given by the Government to the farmers. Attempts have been made to criticise unfairly the Wheat Pool Board, but no praise has been given to the Government for their action. The abolition of the Railway Guarantee Act has not been dealt with by the Opposition. The establishment of sugar-mills to assist farmers in outside places in the cane areas, where no mills were available, has been of great benefit to the sugar-growers. Several Government mills have been erected, and the sugar industry is progressing largely through the assistance of the Government.

Another point which has been intentionally omitted by hon. members opposite is in regard to the assistance which has been given by the Government to settlers who have lost heavily through cyclones in the North. Clermont has good cause to appreciate the treatment which they have received from the Government. The lower part of the town was practically

swept away by flood, and through the passing of the Clermont Flood Relief Act and the assistance given under the Workers' Dwellings Act a new town, superior to the old one which was washed away, has sprung up.

Looking at the administrative measures and the legislation of the Government, one can only come to the conclusion that the real Farmers' party is on this side of the House. We on this side understand the economic system under which we are living, and recognise that we are elected by the people, not to do as hon. members opposite claim they are doing—that is, just to cater for one little section of the community—but to see that all interests in the community get a fair deal. Certain interests will naturally be affected by legislation which is passed for the good of the people of Queensland, and we hear those interests which are affected squealing through their representatives on the opposite side.

I will just quote a few of the things done by this Government for the industrial workers. They have passed the Industrial Arbitration Act and the Factories and Shops Act, and brought about land reform, which has discouraged the land monopolists whom hon. members opposite represent. They have passed the Mines Regulation Act and the Machinery and Scaffolding Act. Then they passed the Shearers and Sugar Workers' Accommodation Act, which ensures decent accommodation instead of the insanitary hovels which the shearers and sugar-workers had to be content with previously. All these measures are beneficial to the community, but hon. members opposite give the Government no credit for them. A few little things like the State fishshop, which showed a slight loss during the last financial year, are held up as examples of the extravagance of this Government.

Mr. FRY: Have they ever paid?

Mr. FOLEY: If we are only going to look at everything from a profit-making point of view, we are not going to do much for the benefit of the masses. What we must look at is the service given to the community, and not the making of profits.

At 2.45 p.m.,

Mr. KIRWAN relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. FOLEY: There are such things as free State education, compensation for miners' phthisis, baby clinics, at which mothers in times of sickness can receive medical treatment and advice for their children, and Government labour exchanges, to prevent chaos and enable the workers to have a better organisation for placing them in work. There is the fair rents legislation, which has benefited many who were being exploited by the rack-renter who bled the community in the past. Not a word has been said about the benefits which accrued to the community by the establishment of the Public Curator's Department. Then there are the Public Defender and the Official Solicitor. The hon. gentleman who has just spoken would probably take exception to the passing of legislation making provision for the defence of prisoners who are not in a position to pay for legal advice.

The Speech covers a wide area, touching upon almost everything of importance—the administrative acts of the Government and the difficulties they had to face during last

Parliament and during the last financial year; also a review of important measures to be submitted this session, which will do much for the people of Queensland generally. Dealing with the State's mineral production, it is pointed out that while last year it amounted in value to £3,462,214—it was nearly £1,000,000 over the average yield because of the high price in the early part of the period—the industry suffered a severe check at the beginning of this year by the fall in prices, which was so great that practically all our copper and tin mining enterprises had to be closed down. That is one of the factors which has tended to create so much unemployment. Yet we find hon. gentlemen opposite trying to make out that this Government are responsible for the closing of those mines. Referring to coal, His Excellency touches on the work done by the Mines Department in the direction of exploiting the coal resources in the Central district. If this Government had done nothing else, at least credit should be given to the Secretary for Mines for the active manner in which he has been administering his department and the sympathetic treatment he has given to various parts of the State in opening up and exploiting some of the coal deposits containing enormous quantities of coal. At a later date, when the facilities which are being established are finally settled, that will go a long way towards increasing the wealth production of this State. Touching upon Bowen, the Speech says—

“The Bowen State Coalmine has been sufficiently developed for an output from the main seam of 500 tons per day, and attention is being given to the Garrick seam with the view of having its coal available when it is needed for coke-making.”

I can foresee that in the very near future Bowen as a coal exporter will be second to, if not ahead of, Newcastle. I have been lucky enough to come in contact with men who have been interested in the coal trade and lately have been travelling round the world. The analysis of the product from the Blair Athol seam and the splendid quality of the coal in Bowen have impressed practically every firm which deals in coal on the other side of the world. The only things we have to contend with are the high shipping freights between Australia and the eastern countries. If it were not for those, instead of the Blair Athol miners working one day a week as at present, there would be a continuous traffic from Blair Athol to Rockhampton or Broadmount. I would like to point out to Ministers that the time is opportune for the Government to give greater assistance to the development of the coal export trade than they have given in the past. At Broadmount they came to the assistance of the Blair Athol Company and established loading facilities, with the result that the company hopes in the near future to have a few boats calling for coal. They have been handicapped by reason of the coal embargo placed on the export of coal from Australia by the Federal Government. On account of the row caused by the workers in New South Wales, that embargo has been or is to be lifted. I would like to point out to the Government that in the middle of the last century England was the hub of the financial world by reason of her having developed an export trade in coal. By that means they drew the ships of the world to

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their ports. Eventually they obtained control of a great part of the manufacture of cotton. Coal has represented practically nine-tenths of Britain's exports. The vessels that visited and took away the coal on their return journey to England brought raw material from various parts of the world, enabling different manufactures to be established. At a later date America established coal-loading facilities, and made special efforts to develop an export trade. She has made such great strides that in the near future she will be ahead of Britain. The Americans arrange their railway system in such a way that they draw 5,000 tons of coal 450 miles in one train-load, whereas in England the greatest load is 300 tons, though the distance is not so great. It would be impossible for us to compete successfully in an export trade to places close to England or America, because their systems are so up to date that they can land the product at the seaports and ship it at a much cheaper rate than we can do. The lowest weight in a coal wagon in America is 50 tons, whereas the highest weight in a coal hopper wagon in Queensland is about 12½ tons. We have to concentrate our efforts on the eastern part of the world. Japan's coal supplies are not of such a good quality, and, although they have coolie labour, the cost of production is greater than it is at Blair Athol and other parts of Australia. We need a system of railway concessions to bring our coal from the hinterland, such as Blair Athol. Even if the State lost a sum of money for a number of years, it would pay, because they would be establishing a trade. Such a thing as losing a few pounds in railway freights would be amply compensated by increased revenue in the way of royalties to the Mines Department. In addition, instead of a population of 400 or 500, there would be a population of 1,000 at Blair Athol if the output were doubled. Those people would be circulating their money, and, in addition, there would be the circulation of the dividends on the shares. If possible, at some future date I am going to bring about a conference of the coalmining companies with the Government so that some arrangement may be come to with the object of launching an export trade and increasing the production of our abundant natural wealth at Blair Athol and the Central district of Queensland.

I wish to compliment the Government on the assistance given to gem miners at Anakie. Several sneers have come from the other side in reference to the attempt made by the Government to stabilise the gem industry, provide more employment, and better the living of the worker in the gem industry. Much has been done since we began operations. An attempt was made to inaugurate a system by which the miners would get the full return from their product.

[9 p.m.] Investigations were made, and the only conclusion the Government could come to was that all the gems produced on the Anakie field must go through the one agency if any degree of success were to be attained.

Mr. FRY: Rubin Brothers.

Mr. FOLEY: Eventually Rubin Brothers were appointed agents for the miners to market the sapphires. The old system which was in operation on the field proved worthless and against the best interests of the miners. Therefore this new scheme was launched and an agreement entered into. This provided that all stones were to go

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through one agency—namely, Rubin Brothers, who received 5 per cent. commission on the total sales from the gems sold on the overseas markets. Rubin Brothers also received interest on the money advanced to the miners on their gems. The money advanced to the miners was 75 per cent. of the estimated selling price of the gems on the European market. Everything went nicely for three months. During six weeks' actual operations in the first period of three months £36,000 in cash was distributed amongst the miners as advances, the average price being £7 10s. per oz. That was the sum received by the miners for first-grade "parcel blue" sapphires. To show the success which attended the operations of the scheme up to a certain point, I might mention that in 1918 there were 3,591 oz. of "parcel blue" sapphires sold for £1,078 12s. 6d., which worked out at £3 per oz. In 1919 there were 10,000 oz. produced, which realised through the private gem buyers on the field £37,000, working out at £3 14s. 7d. per oz. That was the most prosperous year in the history of the sapphire fields of Anakie. One buyer tried to get control of the main production of the field on one occasion, with the result that he forced prices up to the fictitious value of £20 per oz. for first-quality "blues," but that was an abnormal period. Owing to the prices realised by miners in the boom, and the fact that many held back their product from the gem agents there was an increase in the price paid compared with any other in the history of the field. For instance, in January, 1920, there were 940 oz. of "blues" produced for £4,963, averaging £5 2s. per oz. In February there were 1,040 oz. produced for £6,036, averaging £5 16s. per oz. In March 823 oz. were produced for £5,937; I did not work out the average. In April, 1,654 oz. were produced for £11,408, an average of £6 12s. per oz. In September 501 oz. were produced for £3,011, equal to £6 per oz. In December, 1920, there were 955 oz. produced for £2,997, equal to £3 2s. per oz. While this scheme was in operation the following prices were realised:—1921: January, blues, 68 oz.—£500—£7 7s. per oz.; February, blues, 2,618 oz.—£19,708—£7 10s. per oz.; March, blues, 823 oz.—£5,957—£7 5s. per oz.; April, blues, 1,006 oz.—£6,822—£6 15s. per oz.; May, blues, 450 oz.—£1,634—£3 12s. per oz.; June, blues, 399 oz.—£931—£2 6s. per oz. In some instances under this arrangement the miners received as high as £14 per oz. on parcels that were considered by the miners' grader to be above the average, and as low as £3 per oz. on some parcels that were, in his opinion, below the average. When the scheme was launched an agreement was arranged between the Government and Rubin Brothers, based in anticipation of the market remaining normal, and it was anticipated what the normal average market price would be. Under the agreement the price paid to the miner for his product was to be £2 per oz. on the average. Rubin Brothers received an advice from their firm in France saying that was a safe price to work on, with the result that operations were carried out satisfactorily.

The HOME SECRETARY: We actually paid higher rates than the Agent-General advised.

Mr. FRY: That was done to create a monopoly.

Mr. FOLEY: It was never intended to create any monopoly. The idea of the scheme was to make the miners the monopolists over their own product, and Rubin Brothers

were appointed sole agents to market it through. After the scheme was in operation for three months there came an entire collapse of the gem markets of the world. We had advice from the Agent-General's office verifying the cable received from Rubin Brothers. The result was that we had gems stored to the value of £42,000, which could not be sold by the agent in Paris. Seeing that we had this accumulated stock in hand, other arrangements had to be made before the system could be worked satisfactorily. While these arrangements were being made between the Government and the agent the price was reduced; and that is the reason why the Opposition have been written to by a few malcontents on the field who would not be satisfied with anything. Notice was given by the Minister to terminate the agreement, and, at the same time, Rubin Brothers were asked to offer any new suggestions in the hope that we could arrange a system based upon the depressed market, so that the market could be gradually fed and not glutted, and so that the miner would eventually get the same price as if the market was in a normal state. The original agreement compelled the agent to sell, and not to hold the gems, and, as I say, the scheme was very successful for the first three months. We were unlucky in launching our scheme too late. If the scheme had been launched twelve months sooner it would have been a huge success, and it would have been to the credit of the Government for having done something for the gem miners of Queensland. Owing to the collapse of the market the scheme did not work out as well as it might have done. I understand new proposals have been received from Rubin Brothers and discussed by the Government, and if, after investigations are made, the proposals prove satisfactory, at some future date they will be submitted to the miners for approval. If the miners are satisfied, the Government will enter into another agreement in the hope that better results will accrue. If the Government had not entered into the agreement with Rubin Brothers for the sale of the gems, the miners on the field would not have been able to sell 10,000 oz., but under the agreement they sold £50,000 worth up to date.

Mr. Fry: What about the fancy gems?

Mr. FOLEY: Regarding fancy gems, we possess the finest variety of sapphires in the world. We have yellow sapphires, green sapphires, and ruby and parti-coloured sapphires, but there is absolutely no market for these gems overseas. The arrangement with the Government and Rubin Brothers did not refer to fancy gems, the only stones we were interested in being the first-class blue, second-class blue, machine stones, and corundum.

I wish to draw attention to another phase of the Government administration, and that is forestry. We have heard a good deal said by hon. members opposite in condemnation of the Forestry Department, stating that the department has been the main cause of the increased price in timber. Seeing that 74 per cent. of the production of log timber in Queensland comes off farm-clearing and private property, I think that the Forestry Department should be exonerated from any charge in that direction. The hon. member for Normanby makes the charge that, because of the excessive royalty charged by this Government, many firms in Brisbane are

holding off building until the Labour Government are ousted from office. The hon. members opposite, including the hon. member for Normanby, show great ignorance, so far as a knowledge of the economics of forestry go. It would be an education for them to look up the last annual report of the Director of Forestry touching upon price-fixing in relation to timber values. I wish to quote one or two little points in regard to advance in prices. Mr. Swain is a man well versed in his subject—in silviculture and forestry. It is all very fine for hon. members opposite to stand up and make the accusation that the Forestry Department and its royalty system are responsible for the increased prices. The increase in timber values has not been local, but is world wide. If we refer to the prices quoted in the Director's report, we will find a gradual increase in the price of timber, dating back from the days of early settlement, and that it is not caused by excessive royalties, but by the gradual depletion of our forestry resources, making it necessary for our timber-haulers to go further back into the forest, thereby involving extra cost in harvesting and producing.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: These are prices at the stump.

Mr. FOLEY: In many places the department have their own bullock teams, and draw their log supplies to the siding, and the logs are put up under a competitive system at an upset price which is very reasonable, and the buyers from the different sawmills, including the State sawmills, in bidding really determine the market price of timber. The Director of Forestry says—

"The advance in timber values has not been merely local, but universal. The imported equivalent of Queensland pines—viz., American redwood—was quoted in 1914 at from 22s. to 24s. 6d.; in 1917 the market prices ranged from 32s. to 35s. 6d. By 1919 it could be secured only on payment of up to 54s.; and this year's shipments are costing 90s. Baltic pine prices similarly had advanced from 16s. per 100 running feet in 1914 to 32s. in 1920."

He further says—

"In considering these advances it must not be overlooked that in the case of lumber there is no such thing as a prices level, and that the normal trend in all countries is an upward incline, due, obviously, to the gradual depletion of the original forests (particularly of the accessible areas) and the operation of the law of compound interest in the case of plantations created by the expenditure of money. Hitherto, the factor of cost of production has not been taken into account in the sale of forest products, and a hurried, shortsighted liquidation of alienated timber crops throughout the world has resulted in depressed values for wood. The effect of war has been to cut Australia off sharply from its previous inundation by low-cost foreign lumber surpluses, and so soon as the pessimism of war conditions cleared away, there began that lift in local timber values which, though viewed with grave alarm by the industries momentarily directly affected, represents not so much a price inflation as a reversion to value-normality, taking into account the

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previously forgotten but essential factor of cost of forest production."

Again, he says—

"It is axiomatic that the market value of the log fixes the radius of profitable haulage and, therefore, of the acreage of forest to be drawn upon to supply the needs of sawmills. A reduction of log price or an increase in log haulage costs automatically reduces the area of operation, and, therefore, the quantity of raw material available at rail. At the present time there is a shortage of logs, and the natural tendency is to increase log prices in order to increase log supplies. When the reverse happens, the standing timber beyond the existing limits of profitable haulage becomes unmarketable, and the individual settler, unable to await the reaction, is forced to fell and burn an indispensable national and personal asset, in order to make a more immediate livelihood by growing a shorter-period crop. So, whilst the country is perilously short of wood, indispensable supplies of timber may be destroyed by the compulsion of economic conditions."

I have had experience in my own case. I have done a lot of timber harvesting in my time, cutting girders and railway timber supplies in various parts of Australia, and I know it is a fact that in every State in the Commonwealth the timber supplies nearer to railways are generally exhausted first, and, as you advance into the hinterland, you meet with greater disadvantages, and it naturally follows that the cost of producing and harvesting increases. I have exhausted my time, but I have dealt with many points raised by hon. members opposite. I hope that in future, instead of criticising in the manner in which they have done, they will at least give some credit where credit is due.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): During the debate on the Address in Reply hon. members opposite have constantly reiterated the statement that Opposition members have been defaming the State. That is not correct. We know perfectly well, and no one knows better than hon. members opposite, that the criticism has been directed against the Administration and has not been directed against the State. No one in this Chamber can truthfully defame this State. Every hon. member recognises that we possess probably the most wonderful State in the Commonwealth, and that its possibilities are practically limitless. No hon. member on this side of the House has defamed the State. There is a difference between criticising and finding fault with the Administration or the Government of the State and finding fault with the State itself. It has been said more than once that the assets of Queensland were never of greater value than they are to-day. If the Government set out to-day to construct our railways and build our public offices and buildings and equip them with the necessaries for carrying out governmental functions and activities, it would probably cost us 50 per cent. more than they have cost us in the past. The assets of the State are of a greater value to-day than ever before. Unfortunately, the credit of the State is for the time being suffering on account of the Government who have been administering our affairs. It has really become almost tiresome on account of the number of times that that has been repeated in this House, to

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say that that is the real cause of the trouble which exists in Queensland to-day; and, until credit is restored, just so long shall we continue to experience the difficulties we are experiencing in Queensland to-day. During this debate I have not been able to discover any evidence on the part of the Government that the legislation which they propose to carry out in the future will be on different lines from what they have carried out in the past. We find hon. members opposite urging the Government to go ahead as fast as they possibly can with a Loan Bill and make it compulsory, if necessary. What are the reasons which actuate hon. members to get up and speak in that way when they know that statements similar to that and legislative enactments similar to that are causing the difficulties which the Government are experiencing to-day in carrying on the affairs of this State? Confiscation and compulsion! There are only probably two occasions when there should be any necessity to [9.30 p.m.] raise money by a compulsory loan. The first is when war is devastating or threatens to devastate the country, and the second is when famine prevails in the country. In the two cases I have named it is quite justifiable to raise money compulsorily; but there is no justification at the present time for resorting to compulsion to raise loan money in Queensland. Money has been simply rolling in to the Government from every direction; and the result has been that the Government have lost control of the finances of the State, and have spent money in State enterprises, in which tens of thousands of pounds have been lost.

Reference was made this afternoon to the State iron and steel works; but, in my opinion, the Government have had such a fill of State enterprises that, if the money were available to-morrow to start the State iron and steel works, they would turn the proposal down.

Mr. COLLINS: No; it is a plank of our platform.

Mr. TAYLOR: The hon. member has not read the "Standard" to-day, in which he will find it reported that another State enterprise has "gone bung." The Government are going to sell the "Douglas Mawson," and Burke and Company have contracted to run a ship to the Northern ports, with a subsidy from the Government.

Mr. PEASE: If the "Douglas Mawson" had not been run, the people of the North would have starved.

Mr. TAYLOR: I recognise that there was justification for the purchase of a steamer to supply the wants of the people in the Gulf country; but one of the biggest blunders that the Government made was to buy the "Douglas Mawson" to carry on the work. If the Government had simply said to Burke and Company, "We will give you so much a year to run a steamer to North Queensland," they would not have lost money in connection with the "Douglas Mawson."

The TREASURER: We tried every private firm in Australia, and it was the only boat we could buy.

Mr. TAYLOR: The raising of a compulsory loan will mean financial suicide to the State. If that action is going to be adopted, it will be so much the worse for the State. What we want in Queensland is a fair and equitable mode of taxation, but we find that every possible means of taxation

has been resorted to by the Government, until the absolute limit has been reached, and the people are nearly bled white. There are no other sources of taxation that the Government can tap. The retrospective rents payable under the Land Acts Amendment Act of 1920 will not be received during the current year. They amount to £359,000. Income tax is going to show a shrinkage of at least 35 per cent., and probably more, and that has to be added to the decreased returns in other directions. Railway returns are falling off. Then there is the extra rate of interest which we shall have to pay on Treasury bills which are falling due, and in connection with existing loans which mature during the current year. How are we going to face those liabilities? The Federal Government are having the utmost difficulty to get the Diggers' Loan at the present time. No one is going to say that the Federal Government are faultless in regard to the expenditure of money. They have, unfortunately, made blunders like our State Government, and the sooner they are rectified the better it will be for Australia as a whole.

I have read the Governor's Speech with a great amount of interest. We are glad to see that His Excellency took a journey to the far North and made himself conversant with the conditions there.

Mr. COLLINS: At the public expense.

Mr. TAYLOR: He is not the only one who travels at the public expense. Both the hon. member and myself do that, and our wives also.

Mr. COLLINS: We have to pay the expenses of our wives up and down the coast.

Mr. TAYLOR: The Governor saw more of the country on his visit than he would learn from reading about it for six months. He, as well as the Governor-General of the Commonwealth, were impressed with the emptiness of North Queensland. It is unfortunate that the Northern part of the State is so sparsely populated. The hon. member for Herbert gave the credit for practically everything that has been done in North Queensland to the Labour Government; but one Opposition member showed that a large amount of money had been spent in connection with sugar-mills, railways, wharves, and different activities in North Queensland before there ever was a Labour Government, so that the statement of the hon. member that development of North Queensland has been brought about solely by a Labour Government is not quite true. The problem of peopling the North is one which we have to face. We have not solved it yet. I am afraid that the methods adopted in the past are not going to solve the problem. Until we can make the home life in the northern part of Queensland more attractive and comfortable for women, we shall never fill it with a white population. I have not been up North for a considerable time, but the lack of conveniences for women and children when I was there made the possibility of peopling North Queensland look practically hopeless to me. To enable North Queensland to be defended, a virile population is required.

Mr. COLLINS: We want cheap shipping freights.

Mr. TAYLOR: We want everything cheap. It appears to me that the day of cheap things has gone by for a considerable time. There does not seem to be any probability of

things becoming any cheaper. The Governor states—

"So far as I have travelled I have been greatly impressed by the vast possibilities of the State, and while there is no reason why our people should lose courage, or endurance, or ability in even the most northern portion of it, numerically they are unequal to the responsibilities the possession of so large and rich a territory has imposed on them."

That is very true. The responsibilities devolving upon the mere handful of people in North Queensland at the present time is a greater responsibility than they can reasonably bear. The Governor also states—

"To exploit fully such enormous natural resources a much greater population than we now have is imperatively needed, and State and Commonwealth are co-operating in an immigration scheme which my advisers are of opinion will secure for Queensland as many immigrants of the best kind as we can accommodate."

I am not in favour of putting a lot of single men on the land. It will be better if we can get from abroad married couples who will settle in North Queensland. A man on the land is at a great loss unless he has a wife to help him in his work. If we could get married couples to go to North Queensland, with a little capital to assist them during the first years of settlement, we should have accomplished something in the interests of the State.

Another matter dealt with in the Speech, and which has been referred to by the hon. member for Oxley, is water conservation. The hon. member told us about the increased cost in regard to the Inkerman irrigation area, due to the delays and underestimates as to the cost. It is quite evident that greater care is necessary in estimating the cost of big public works. If you are going to load an irrigation scheme, such as the one at Inkerman, and a man is going to be asked to pay over £200 a year in water rates, you will add greatly to the cost of production, and, as a natural consequence, to the cost of living.

At 9.45 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: We all realise that drought conditions have become somewhat normal. Every few years we get a drought period, and the country suffers to the extent of probably millions of pounds. The matter was brought before me very forcibly when a parliamentary party went to Charleville at the time Sir Ross Smith arrived in Queensland. The day we arrived in Charleville there was not a drop of water in the Warrego River. There had been heavy rains in the back country, and at about 3 or 4 o'clock the following afternoon the flood waters came down the Warrego River, although not a drop of rain had fallen in Charleville. In three or four days the river was running 8 or 10 feet deep. The whole of that water ran to waste. I have never had a greater object lesson on the necessity for water conservation. Money invested in that direction would be well spent. We should be able to irrigate a limited area of country, and we should probably save the lives of hundreds of thousands of stock, thus adding to the prosperity of the State.

We all know that at the present time a world-wide financial depression exists. No

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one denies it. As a result we know there is a considerable amount of unemployment. But, surely, we must ask ourselves, can the Government fairly and honestly claim, considering the amount of revenue they have received, that things should be in the deplorable state they are in? Government supporters cannot truthfully say we should be in this position. If our revenue had been falling, there might have been some excuse for the unemployment. But our revenues have been continually expanding, and now we are coming to the time when there is going to be a big fall, and we have no reserves of taxation, and do not know where to turn in order to carry on the activities of government in the way in which they should be carried on.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What do you propose?

Mr. TAYLOR: As a start, something should be done in the way of restoring the credit of the State. The Government should show their regret at some of the legislation they have introduced, having acted detrimentally to the best interests of the State. If that were done, we would progress, because it is abundantly evident that our only salvation at the present time is going to come from an influx of money from outside. We have to get it somehow, and the only way is to show that we are determined that our legislation in the future will be so framed that it will not impair the credit of the country. It has been said that an attempt was made on the other side of the world to interfere with the domestic legislation of the State. Nothing of the kind has been done. The Government can introduce any legislation they like and nobody can interfere. But if, after they have introduced that legislation, they go to the man outside and tell him they want to borrow, surely it is within his right to say whether or not he is disposed to lend it. Can that be called interfering with our domestic legislation? The credit of the country is as good as that of any country in the world; it is the Government's credit that has gone smash, and which is responsible for the whole of our trouble.

The Speech also contains remarks in regard to the North-South Railway. I quite agree with the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley in that connection. Why should this State, which we say is the best and richest State, be in the position of a common mendicant begging the Federal Government to give us £2,000,000 for the Burnett lands and to divert a railway to Queensland which it was promised would run through the centre of Australia? Why not be men enough to carry on our activities without having to adopt that ignoble attitude?

The PREMIER: Where do you think that railway should be built?

Mr. TAYLOR: I think it should be built in accordance with the agreement made with the South Australia Government, and Queensland should be prepared to build herself any railways she wants.

The PREMIER: Do you think the Commonwealth should spend £50,000,000 building that railway through the desert?

Mr. TAYLOR: It is not a question of whether I think the Commonwealth should or should not spend £50,000,000 on the construction of a railway. The fact remains that an agreement was made that on account of the transfer of the Northern Territory to

the federation they would build that railway.

The PREMIER: Has Queensland no interest in the matter?

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, Queensland has an interest in it, and we will have to help build it.

The PREMIER: You want us to help build a railway through the desert in South Australia?

Mr. TAYLOR: We helped to build a desert railway through South Australia, and we will have to help to build this trans-continental railway that is going to run from north to south of the State. The Premier is evidently forgetting that his proposal will mean three different railway gauges.

The PREMIER: Not at all.

Mr. TAYLOR: You are going to have the Victorian gauge, the New South Wales gauge, and the Queensland gauge.

The PREMIER: Not necessarily.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is one of the things which will have to be considered. I am like the hon. member for Oxley. I think we have built quite sufficient non-paying railways; indeed, we have built a few too many. Let us develop the land along our existing railways to the best of our ability, and then we shall be doing some good work. To build a lot more railways would be a great mistake at the present time, because we have not the population, and we have not the money. Certain railways have to be completed, but a lot of careful thought would need to be given to any proposal to construct new railways. I would like to read something with regard to Queensland, written by a man who knows Queensland—

“THE QUEEN STATE OF THE COMMON-WEALTH.”

“Queensland—now popularly known as the ‘Queen State of the Commonwealth’—might be truly described in the words of the Patriarch as ‘A land of promise. . . A goodly land. . . A land flowing with milk and honey. A land of wheat and of barley. . . A land of vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; whose stones are made of iron and out of whose hills you may dig brass. . . Where thy flocks and herds multiply, and thy silver and gold is multiplied, and everything thou hast. . .’”

Those are the words of the Agent-General in London; that is what he says the State is like. It ought to be like that; but, unfortunately, at the present time it is not. The Agent-General, in a very excellent report on the year's operations, tells us that for the year 1920 the total amount of all kinds of meat imported into Great Britain was no less than 810,000 tons. He says that this was actually an advance of 12 per cent. on the previous highest annual import—viz., that of 1913. Unfortunately, we are not getting the share we ought of that tremendous import. The Agent-General goes on to state the reasons. He tells us that the South American “frigorificos,” controlled by the big American meat-packers, are at present once more swelling the volume of this chilled import into the United Kingdom, and the market in this commodity may be said to have a controlling influence over the fortunes of frozen meat generally in any season. It is the chilled meat which is going into Great Britain which is prejudicially affecting the sale of our meat in London. He goes on

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to tell us that it behoves meat-producers in all regions to study the possibilities of joining in this business of carrying meat with a soft surface on long voyages. A large portion of the European market is best suited to be served with meat which will suit the national cooking habit of the boiling pot—chilled meat in this regard being far preferable to frozen. We are finding it very difficult, on account of the immense imports from South America, to get a payable price for our producers. Then he points out the tremendous fall in the value of the products which are being sent to London. He tells us that in mid-March mutton was at 110s. per cwt., while in December it fell to 58s. 6d. Beef was quoted at 110s. in mid-March, and it fell to 60s. per cwt. in December. These are the

figures of our Agent-General, who [10 p.m.] is recognised by all parties as a capable, efficient business man who knows what he is writing about. He tells us in regard to hides that Queensland hides, of 30 to 40 lb., brought from 26d. to 28d. per lb. in the beginning of 1920, and they were down to 10½d. per lb. in December. That shows how the prices of pastoral products fell during the year, and that is the reason we are subject to such a slump in values. In addition to that, there is the increased cost of production. I do not intend to take up the time of the House any longer, but I express the hope that any legislation the Government propose to introduce will be something we can all support. The Government have got on their list a Bill for the abolition of the Upper House, but we know they do not intend to abolish the Upper House at all. They never intended to abolish it. All their talk about abolishing the Upper House is all camouflage and humbug. The Legislative Council will be there for the next fifty years, and probably some of the younger generation who are members now will be members in fifty years' time. I hope the Government will give serious attention to some of their legislation and jettison some of it. They have jettisoned the "Flappers' Vote" Bill, and I do not see any mention of the Greater Brisbane Bill. There are a few other Bills we have lost sight of lately, and I do not suppose we shall ever see them again. I hope we never will.

Mr. BARBER (*Bundaberg*): 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 to-morrow.

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