

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 1921

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER, 1921.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 3.30 p.m.

QUESTION.

RETURN OF FEES PAID TO BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, AND CONVEYANCERS.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*), without notice, asked the Attorney-General—

“When will the return in regard to fees paid to barristers and solicitors, asked for by the House on 30th September last, be ready for presentation to the House; also, if the similar return asked for last session, on 1st December, 1920, will be made available at the same time?”

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

“The return to which the hon. member referred is now in course of preparation, and the return which he asked for last session will be presented at the same time.”

GOVERNMENT LOAN BILL.

ASSENT.

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

Hon. W. Bertram. |

SUPREME COURT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): I beg to move—

“That the Bill be now read a third time.”

Question put and passed.

The Bill was ordered to be transmitted to the Legislative Council, for their concurrence, by message in the usual form.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—EIGHTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

Question stated—That £5,796 be granted for “Court of Industrial Arbitration”—

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): This vote gave them an opportunity of showing how assistance should be given in running easily the machinery of industry. It was natural for Parliament to take a keen interest in the legislation they passed. It was no use their passing legislation unless they watched its subsequent results. No one could gainsay the fact that conciliation and arbitration were essential for this community. The whole of the credit for the adoption of conciliation and arbitration was not due to this Government. Prior to their coming into power wages boards existed which gave satisfaction. This was only an extension of the wages board system. The Arbitration Court had been a success in a number of ways, notwithstanding many pinpricks in regard to the awards which from time to time were issued. Because of various happenings outside, conciliation and arbitration to-day was rather an important question. He would quote some authorities on the subject—

“Hon. C. C. Kingston, K.C. M.L.C. (Barrister and ex-Attorney-General of South Australia).—In favour of State conciliation and arbitration. Formation of one head board with local boards for dealing with local cases. Registration of societies and unions. Awards to be made compulsory and enforced by remedies.”

“Hon. Edmund Barton, K.C. M.L.C. (Barrister and late Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, New South Wales).—Thinks no reasonable man can doubt the wisdom of having conciliation, whereby men holding different opinions could be brought together by authority, and have their differences settled. Favourable to such a board as is proposed by the president, but thinks the court should only act at the request of both parties.”

“Richard Tecce (Manager A.M.P. Society).—In favour of conciliation and arbitration, if decisions are enforced, without which they would not be worth a jot. The labouring classes might generally accept the awards of the court of courts, but highly likely they would not on matters of grave importance.”

“Hon. Mr. Justice Windeyer (Judge of the Supreme Court).—Thinks conciliation

[*Hon. J. Mullan.*

has only to be tried to be found a success. Whether by mutual consent or legislation, mutual consent, after all, must form the basis. Considers the experiment of trying conciliation worth anything it may cost.”

“Alexander Oliver (Registrar Friendly Societies).—In favour of primary court of conciliation, with a judicial body always in existence in case of failure; the board to be representative. Members should have personal knowledge of the trade affected, and the public should also be represented. In favour also of courts of arbitration.

“William Guthrie Spence (General Secretary Amalgamated Miners, and President Shearers' Union).—In favour of a State board of conciliation. Board to be always in existence; chairman to be appointed by members rather than by Government; in favour of a retired judge as such.”

He hoped those views would guide some members of the Government. It had been clearly indicated to them that certain hon. members required wise guidance in matters of national importance at the present time—

“George R. Bradley (Secretary Marine Officers' Association).—In favour of a board of conciliation—an equal number of members on each side. Believe the men would loyally abide by its decisions.”

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will confine his remarks to the question of “Court of Industrial Arbitration.”

Mr. KERR: Conciliation and arbitration came under the same Act. The machinery provided by the Arbitration Court was economical, and provided an avenue for the dispensing of justice to all parties. The object of its establishment was to aid national prosperity by preventing a periodical cessation of production and governing the relations between controlled industry and the workers; but to-day they were getting away very much from that objective. That was why every support should be given by the Committee to the Industrial Arbitration Court as it existed at present. It was well recognised that there were two parties in industrialism, and they could meet to-day on common ground at round-table conferences, and, with the aid of heart-to-heart talks, decide their differences, or, if those differences still remained, appeal to a judge. Such conferences of employers and employees did away with things so detrimental to the State as the cessation of work, the operation of profiteers, and the desire of captains of industry and the knights of labour to smash one another. It would be a rather inglorious fight if the employer sat down and took everything that was coming his way without a struggle. It would be very onesided; yet the workers were rather inclined to resent any kick from the other side. Round-table conferences were the sort of thing that was going to dispense with that. How much better the community would be if they could have in Queensland such machinery to deal with industry and retain what they already had! He was stressing round-table conferences and goodwill towards all men—which was what Australians were noted for. To-day

that goodwill had been smashed by those persons who had the reins of government in Queensland. He did not say the Premier was responsible, but some of those behind him were, and he must either shoulder the responsibility or get out. Sir Samuel Griffith, on the same question, said—

“The law could not enforce the acceptance of his advice. Conciliation could only succeed if it acquired the confidence of the people.”

That was perfectly true. Utterances had been made and printed and distributed and used against conciliation and arbitration. It seemed extraordinary that the Government should pass an enactment dealing with arbitration and then take the first opportunity to discard it, and to denounce something that had helped to stabilise the unfortunate position between employers and employees. Everything was done to harass and undermine and hamper what was known as the capitalist. There was really no such thing in Queensland. The alleged capitalist was just as much a worker in Australia to-day as what they called the worker himself. All he got out of an industry, and the money he had invested in it, was a reward for services rendered. There were no men going round with bulging pockets with money to burn. If there were, the Government would very quickly get the money by some means.

Mr. RYAN: Do you think arbitration benefited the railway men?

Mr. KERR: He did. Without taking any notice of what had happened more recently to confirm it, he wanted to read from a report of the All Australia Labour Conference, dealing with conciliation and arbitration—

“Capitalism could only be abolished by the workers uniting in one class-conscious economic organisation to take and hold the means of production by revolutionary industrial and political action. Revolutionary action meant action to secure complete change—viz., the abolition of capitalistic ownership of the means of production—whether privately or through the State—and the establishment in its place of social ownership by the whole community.”

The Arbitration Court should be there to stay, and no member of the community should preach revolutionary doctrines and have them printed and distributed free of cost throughout the State. That was tending to destroy the Arbitration Court to-day.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to point out to the hon. member, as I have previously done, that on this vote he can discuss the administration of the Arbitration Court, but I cannot permit the hon. member to discuss revolutionary methods. The object of this vote is to discuss the administration of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KERR: When he knew of anything that mitigated against the successful working of the Arbitration Court, he was justified in pointing out the circumstances. To go a little bit further, there was what was known as the I.W.W.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman again that the object of this vote is to give him and other hon. members of the Committee an opportunity of discussing the administration of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. KERR: According to the “Government Gazette” of the 24th February last, the Arbitration Court laid down the basic wage for Queensland. The court had to have regard, in the first place, to the average prosperity of the industry; and, in the second place, to the circumstances applying to industries having greater or less than average prosperity. There would be no difficulty in fixing a basic wage for industries of average prosperity. He did not think that the standard of living should be brought down one iota to-day. The basic wage of £4 5s. for a man, wife, and three children was just sufficient to buy the necessaries of life, and in industries of average prosperity there was no difficulty in passing on any increases in wages. When all was said and done, increased wages were passed on to the community, and the community bore the cost in indirect taxation. To fix a wage for industries which were not of average prosperity was a very big thing. Mr. Justice McCawley did not decide that the basic wage should apply to all industries, but said that all cases would be dealt with on their merits. The Government were not getting over the situation by bringing all non-paying industries under their wing, and their proposal with regard to Mount Morgan for the already overburdened Railway Department to take over a private industry was not a solution of the difficulty. The only solution was more production. One Government member had spoken about under-production in this State. The Right Hon. J. R. Clynes, M.P., said—

“Labour agitators are stating that more production means to many already dissatisfied workers simply more and more profits to shareholders. When I read statements like that, written by good Labour men, I despair of making universal that sound instruction in elementary economics upon which the acceptance of Labour and socialistic doctrine must finally rest. If it were true that more production merely means more profits, it would, of course, mean that less production would mean less profits. The very reverse is the case.”

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. KERR: He connected his remarks by saying that there was one industry to which it was very hard to apply the basic wage. He thought he was justified in referring to that matter if he could thereby

[4 p.m.] point out some way in which they might improve conditions in an industry which was not profitable so as to allow the basic rate of wage to be paid. The writer proceeded—

“A low rate of production is not a great embarrassment for the employer. His profit is made even more by restricted production than by production on a scale of abundance.”

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already called the hon. member to order. I do not wish to ask him to resume his seat, but I would call his attention to the fact that, while in discussing this vote he is entitled to discuss the various awards and their effects, he is not entitled to continue on the line he is taking.

Mr. KERR: It was very difficult to proceed if he was only allowed to discuss the administration.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have given the hon. member quite a wide field for discussion.

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Mr. KERR: There was only one way of getting out of the difficulty, and that was to produce more than they were doing to-day. In connection with the work of the Arbitration Court, they should take notice of what Lord Birkenhead, who was an eminent authority, said—

“While I believe that any attempt to socialise industry would do irreparable harm, I also believe just as profoundly that a nation-wide effort to humanise it would do incalculable good. It is constantly complained that the evolution of industry—”

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will pay attention to what I have said, otherwise I shall have to ask him to resume his seat. I have already indicated three times that the hon. member will be in order in discussing arbitration and its effect on industries and the State generally, and also the question of awards; but he is not in order in discussing the matters which he is referring to now.

Mr. KERR: He would tackle the question of the Arbitration Court, and what it had done as far as preference to unionists was concerned.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be perfectly in order in doing that.

Mr. KERR: He had recently asked the question of the Attorney-General, and that gentleman had referred him to his (Mr. Kerr's) legal adviser. There were many men walking about the streets to-day who could not get placed on the books of the unions. He could mention two cases that he was interested in. In one case he secured a man a job. The man started, and joined up with a certain union, and kept at work two days. Another union representative came along, and said that he was doing work which came under their union. The man told him (Mr. Kerr) about it, and he advised him to go and register in that union. The one union took a certain amount of the man's money, and when he went to join the second union he was told the books were full. That man had a family of five. He had to walk the streets, and he subsequently came on the State for rations. That was one of the things that the officials and agitators in the Trades Hall did. That man was debarred from eking out a living for a few weeks by casual work. He thought such small pin-pricks should be removed, and that could only be done by giving every support to round-table conferences, and cultivating good feeling between employers and employees, by doing away with the knights of labour as against the knights of industry, and creating good-fellowship. In regard to contentious matters, redress could be obtained by appealing to the judge of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What do you know about it?

Mr. KERR: He had studied the matter just as much as the Minister. He had gone to see the Director of Labour in a number of cases, and inquired into matters. He hoped that the pin-pricks which were so apparent to-day would be removed by the judge of the Arbitration Court instead of only suspending for a period the preference to unionists clause. The unions should not attempt to prevent men from taking jobs instead of sitting in the Trades Hall playing cards. The quicker the Arbitration Court stepped in and immediately deregistered any

union which took upon itself to cancel a job for a man, the better it would be. He had talked to men, who had asked him what was the good of looking for work, as they would not be allowed by the unions to take it. He did not desire to say anything further on that point, as there was a case pending; and he would have refrained from mentioning the matter, but the Chairman had put him in the position of having to take the matter up.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): He rose for the purpose of correcting a statement made by the hon. member for Murrumba the other night. When speaking on arbitration that hon. member had said that old and infirm workers were not allowed to work. Statements like that getting abroad would only keep men out of work instead of finding work for them. The hon. member said—

“He knew of an old man who had been squeezed out of the city, and who was working nine hours a day and getting £4 a week at Burpengary, because he was a slow worker because of his age. That man was quite willing to work the extra hour, and was quite capable of doing his work and gave his employer a fair return for the money that he received. That was a big wage for an old man. But under the present conditions he could not get work in Brisbane because he was an old man. Because he was an old man the unions would not allow him to work. The Arbitration Act was cruel, or at least not fair, in that respect. It was one of the cruellest and meanest things that a man of that age was not allowed to work in the city. Surely they should honour, respect, and help old age. They were not helping old age. In that respect the Arbitration Act was an absolutely disgraceful failure.”

That statement was incorrect, so far as the Industrial Arbitration Act was concerned, and also in regard to the Industrial Arbitration Court and industrial magistrates. Section 19 of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916 provided—

“1. Any aged or infirm worker who deems himself or herself unable to earn the minimum wage prescribed by any award may apply to the court, and any industrial inspector may apply to the court on his or her behalf, for a permit in writing to work for less than the wage prescribed.”

It was regrettable that hon. members opposite should make statements of that kind. Old men who read such statements would come to the conclusion that they were debarred from working in any industry, whereas the Act specifically made provision for them to be employed. While speaking the other night on the coloured alien question, the hon. member for Musgrave said that what he (Mr. Dash) said about coloured aliens was incorrect. He had a cutting from the “Cairns Times,” which proved that coloured aliens were getting employment in the sugar industry, while white men were allowed to walk about without work. Not only were coloured aliens being employed, but they were not being paid in accordance with the Sugar Award. The report said—

“INDUSTRIAL COURT.

“BREACHES OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT.

“In the Cairns Industrial Court this morning, before His Worship, Mr. W.

[*Mr. Kerr.*

Simpson, P.M., Alexander Brown laid a complaint against Samuel Christensen for a breach of the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, in that he failed to pay one Ball Singh, a coloured employee, in the presence of the industrial inspector.

"Defendant pleaded guilty to the charge and said he was not conversant with the award.

"It's your place to know the award; you have an association here, but I don't know if you are a member of it," said the P.M.

"Mr. Brown: There are three Hindus recently employed by him, still waiting to be paid.

"Mr. Simpson: It's your place to pay them at the office. I will inflict the usual fine of £5, in default through levy and distress in default three weeks in Cairns Gaol.

"Another farmer was also brought before the court with (1) employing two coloured labourers in connection with the cultivation of sugar, which was on country of more than 40 acres; (2) not paying the coloured labourers before an officer of the law. The cases were taken together and a plea of guilty was given to each charge."

That proved that the statements he made with regard to coloured aliens in the sugar industry were quite correct, and, if hon. members opposite were not in favour of coloured labour, they would take some action, in view of the information he had given, to see that the unemployed white men they were talking so much about were given work in that district. The people they represented were given preference to coloured aliens as against white workers. They were prepared to keep the white workers in receipt of relief rations rather than give them work. He hoped that his remarks would be noticed by the employers in North Queensland, who, he hoped, would give preference to white workers.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): In view of the important bearing the work of the Industrial Court had on industrial life, he thought the speeches of hon. members opposite were disappointing. So far they had been simply attempting to make political capital at the expense of Opposition members. The only speeches which really dealt with the question before the Committee were the speeches of hon. members for Oxley, Nundah, and Enoggera. They should discuss the question of whether the court's action had increased unemployment, driven trade from Queensland to other States, deterred the employer from providing work, and rendered the employment of apprentices impossible. They had to remember that the court had had a comparatively easy task up till lately, because it had been dealing with a rising market. There had now been a decline in the value of many of their staple products. To illustrate the position in Australia to-day regarding production, he would refer to the Director of Labour, who, in his report for the year ended 30th June, 1921, pointed out that the applications made to him for employment numbered over 44,000, and he had been able to place only something over 13,000. Some arresting figures had been given in evidence taken on the matter of instituting a forty-four-hour week, regarding the

economic position of the Commonwealth in 1918-19 compared with the pre-war year of 1913-14, by Mr. C. H. Wickens, Supervisor of Census and Compiler of Statistics. He pointed out that, if the 1913 prices had remained unchanged, the value of production in 1918-19 would have been £177,779,000, as compared with £218,103,000 in 1913-14. In other words, there had been a falling off in the value of production during those years of over £40,000,000. He did not attribute that solely to the work of the court, but it was fair to ask whether it had been a contributing factor. With regard to the value of production to the worker he might quote from a speech made by one of the most prominent leaders of the Labour movement in Great Britain, Mr. Clynes, M.P.—

"All these factors reduced production, and again up and up went the price of the commodity produced."

Further on he said—

"Increased production lessens his difficulties. [The worker's] decreased production increases his burdens and diminishes the purchasing power of his wages."

During the war they were very pleased with the establishment of the shipbuilding industry in Australia. For the time being, they were able to compete with the rest of the world, with advantage to Australia. For some reason or other, that advantage had disappeared. Mr. Poynton, M.P., the Minister in charge of that department, said—

"He could not disclose the nature of the cables that had passed between Mr. Hughes and himself during the time that the latter was in England, but the problem was a very serious one. The position was that ships could be purchased in England in commission pounds per ton cheaper than they could be built for in Australia. It was not a question of shifting material from Port Adelaide to Williamstown, but whether or not the Government could carry on the industry at all."

The "Sydney Morning Herald" on 5th October, 1921, in regard to the forty-four-hour week, had an article in which appeared the following paragraph:—

"To-day the steamers are being built in Australia at a cost on the average of £30 a ton, whilst similar class vessels can be purchased at from £6 to £12 per ton.

"By its construction policy of the past year, it is said the Commonwealth Government has lost over £1,000,000, and on every vessel launched since November last or now in course of construction, judged by ruling values, a minimum loss of 50 per cent. has been or will be incurred."

He was not speaking against the rate of wages. His contention was that the wages had to be earned before they could be paid. He was now dealing with the constant demand that was being made to decrease the number of hours. Again, in regard to the iron and steel industry, they found that the ironmasters in New South Wales were complaining. The following appeared in a New South Wales newspaper on 3rd October, 1921:—

"According to Mr. S. Hoskins, director of the ironworks company, the future of the Lithgow ironworks is in the lap

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of the gods. He points out that the company has still to compete against continental and British importation at a big disadvantage. Great Britain is buying large quantities of cheap steel billets from Belgium and rolling them into refined steel at English mills. This, he says, is some of the material which is being imported into this country, and is being produced at such a price as to make competition difficult. The industry in Australia has been hit very hard during the past three or four months, due to increases in wages, the shorter week, and other causes."

Under those circumstances, he considered it would be wise for the court to consider seriously the matter before they made the cost of production any higher. He knew that he would be told that they should increase the protection. He was a protectionist, but he believed in reason in all things; and if they increased the protective duties too highly they would impair the ability of their producers to compete with the markets of the world. The Opposition stood for arbitration, which loomed very largely in their platform. But they realised their responsibilities as producers, and they sometimes wondered where the thing was going to end. The following appeared in a Melbourne newspaper regarding the effect of the award granted to the Amalgamated Society of Engineers:—

"It was shown yesterday that the wages award in the recent plank of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers had resulted in the loss to Australia of many large contracts, including one of about £120,000 for the erection of towers required by the Electricity Commission at Morwell."

As showing what their limitations were, he would quote a letter which appeared in a Southern paper in November, 1920. It got down to the gist of the case, and pointed out that the indiscriminate application of the basic wage would take more than the whole of the production of New South Wales to cope with it. The letter read—

"THE BASIC WAGE.

"TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'HERALD.'

"The basic wage per family of four at £4 5s. per week is £221 per year; 2,000,000 divided by four gives 500,000 groups of four in New South Wales. If 500,000 is multiplied by 221 we have £110,500,000 as the basic wage per annum for New South Wales. The 'Statistical Bulletin' of June, 1920, on page 40, gives the value of production of the principal industries of New South Wales (including pastoral, agricultural, mining, dairying, minor—poultry, bees, rabbits—forests, and fisheries, manufacturing) as: In the year 1917-18, £99,202,000; in the year 1918-19, £98,101,000; or £12,399,000 too little to pay a uniform basic wage of £4 5s. per week to each group of four persons. Moreover, according to the official year book of New South Wales, in 1918 the interest charge on the New South Wales debt was £5,220,307. That is, the total production of New South Wales is £17,619,000 too little to pay our basic wage and our interest charge. Of course, if an industry cannot afford to pay a basic wage it should be shut down."

How were they going to get over that position? In 1917, he foresaw the position which was going to arise, and he moved for the

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appointment of a Royal Commission containing a business element to go into the whole question, and make recommendations as to any necessary amendments in their legislation on the subject. Because it had been moved by a member of the Opposition side, it was opposed by the Government. At page 1207 of "Hansard," during this debate the Minister (Hon. W. Forgan Smith) said—

"As a consequence, there was a definite conflict of interest between the two, and prior to the establishment of Arbitration Courts they used to fight it out by methods referred to to-day as 'direct action,' and, whilst employers and employees were fighting amongst themselves by that barbaric method, the general community who desired the service of a particular industry suffered owing to stoppages of work and the dislocation of industry. It was recognised by Parliament that public interests must be safeguarded, and the Arbitration Court was established with a view to calling the rival interests together and fixing a fair wage on the basis laid down in the Act."

Yet, in 1917, although they had a Commonwealth Arbitration Court and Arbitration Courts in the States, the hon. member for Mackay and the hon. member for [4.30 p.m.] Brisbane moved and seconded resolutions in the Domain in favour of the shipping strike. The Minister in charge of that Estimate either moved or seconded—he forgot which—a resolution in favour of a method which he described as barbaric.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That was not the shipping strike.

Mr. SWAYNE: What strike was it?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. SWAYNE: He most certainly did. It was very hard to account for that strike, but they all knew that, so far as rendering any aid to the Allies during the war was concerned, at that time Australia was down and out. There was trouble in the New South Wales Government workshops at Eveleigh because of introduction of the card system, and, through some mysterious sympathy, the transport unions connected with sea traffic—the seamen, the watersiders, and, he thought, the meat workers—came out. Mr. Burke, the president of the Seamen's Union, he thought, and secretary of the Brisbane branch, was not able to account for the strike. One of the shortcomings of the Arbitration Court was that it could enforce awards upon only one side. That was not just. A court, to entitle itself to respect as holding the scales of justice evenly between the parties, should be able to enforce its awards on them both. The prevalence of unemployment and the serious position of some of their big industries, to which he had referred, could be largely traced to the inability of the court to enforce its awards upon one section of the community. He was in the Assembly when the first movement to secure arbitration was made, and he remembered the late Mr. Bowman, who had the respect of both sides, express his pleasure that such a thing was to be brought into vogue, and prophesied that it would bring about industrial peace. Unfortunately, under present administration, that prophecy had signally lacked fulfilment. He could quote a hundred instances, but he took one

from the North as recorded in the October issue of the "Australian Sugar Journal"—

"A very serious situation has arisen at the Mulgrave Mill, owing, in the first instance, to a dispute with a gang of cancutters, under contract with a grower at Freshwater. The award rate for cutting was 8s. 3d. per ton, and the gang demanded 12s. 6d. The cane inspector fixed the rate at 10s. 3d., to which the farmer consented. The gang then called in the disputes committee (a body elected by the union), who recommended 11s. 6d., and the members ceased work. They were prosecuted, and fined £3 each."

Not for their breaking of the Act, but simply for breach of contract—

"The farmer's labourers then cut and loaded 60 tons, at a rate working out at 34s. 2d. per man per day, while experienced cutters, on the same scale, would have made 44s. 6d. When the cane reached the mill the hands refused to crush it, and left the mill, and all work stopped.

"A ballot was taken on the question, 'Are you in favour of striking for the reinstatement of No. 15 gang at the price asked for?' The result was 243 to 11 in favour of striking. Keeble's cane was declared black, and the railway men were asked not to haul it; but they very rightly declined to obey the Australian Workers' Union. On the cane arriving in the mill yard Australian Workers' Union officials asked the general manager what he proposed doing; and his reply was that the cane would be crushed. At a subsequent meeting, a ballot was taken, and it was decided by 260 to 3 not to crush this cane until the original gang—who caused the trouble—were reinstated, and the price demanded by the disputes' committee paid. This, in face of the industrial magistrate's decision fining these men for breach of contract.

"On 28th September, the Arbitration Court in Brisbane ordered the industrial magistrate at Cairns to proceed to Gordonvale to hold a compulsory conference with reference to the dispute at the Mulgrave Mill. At this conference, which was held on 30th September, 221 members of the Australian Workers' Union voted (not by ballot), and decided unanimously against accepting the suggestion by the industrial magistrate, to the following effect: 'That the gang should be reinstated, the matters in dispute to be determined by the magistrate, provided the work be resumed forthwith.'

"It has been stated that the strike was undoubtedly engineered by the same extremists as those at the South Johnstone, with the object of 'white-anting' the Australian Workers' Union. It transpires that the six farmers' labourers (of whom four are holders of union tickets), cut and loaded from the paddock in dispute, after the gang had left, 3½ tons of green cane daily, and ordinary cutters could easily cut 4½ tons. Thus, at the price offered (10s. 3d.) the earnings would be handsome. Yet the gang demanded 11s. 6d. burnt, and point-blank refused to cut green. Those of the scratch gang who held union tickets applied for their renewal, and the others

applied for new tickets, but both requests were refused."

Why were they refused tickets? That showed the Australian Workers' Union's sympathy with the strikers—

"The crop was inspected independently by certain of the Mulgrave farmers, who had been sceptical concerning the position taken up by Keeble, and they returned incensed to think that a dispute could arise over such a good cutting crop."

Those men did nothing wrong. They acted in compliance with the law. Why should new tickets be refused to them?

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

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): Notwithstanding the dark predictions of the hon. member for Mirani, as to what the future had in store for them, he was one of those who believed that the world would still go round. He was not surprised to hear the remarks of the hon. member, who belonged to the older school of thought in regard to arbitration.

Mr. SWAYNE: I have always stood for arbitration.

Mr. COLLINS: As one of those who belonged to the newer school of thought and advocated arbitration in the pioneering days, he (Mr. Collins) was astonished at what had been accomplished during the last nine years. Anyone who knew the history of the State before 1912 knew that, so far as State laws went, there was then no other method of settling industrial disputes than by direct action, and, notwithstanding what the hon. member for Mirani quoted with regard to the recent strike at Mulgrave—which he was not upholding—he wanted to point out that in the transition from direct action to arbitration they had accomplished wonders. They belonged to a race, the bulk of which—that was, the organised trade unions in Great Britain—did not stand for arbitration as they understood it in the Commonwealth. They had been accustomed for centuries to kick when they thought they were being wronged, and the methods adopted in Great Britain, even at the present time, were direct action methods. When one realised those things, they ought to be well pleased with what had been accomplished. As one who belonged to the working class, he knew the weaknesses of his class, and he also knew their strength; and, considering that they had thought for centuries that it was a right thing to strike instead of resorting to arbitration, and, considering that they had arbitration in Queensland only since 1912, he repeated that in the last few years their progress had been remarkable. In 1912 the representatives of the workers endeavoured to amend the Industrial Peace Bill, which was introduced by the Government of that day, but it was not till 1915 that they did amend it as they wished. He well remembered the words he spoke on that occasion—that that measure was not the be-all and end-all of the Labour movement—and he said the same to-day. More than likely the Act required amendment, because, the Labour movement being evolutionary, he believed in change. They lived under changing conditions. He was not frightened at the cry against shorter hours, because he knew the same old cry against them had come down the centuries. He remembered that, when they had a twelve-hour day and sought to bring about a ten-hour day, they were told

that Great Britain would be ruined as a great manufacturing country by the change. He remembered that they were told the same thing when they wanted an eight-hour day. What was the use of the brain which man possessed and which he was devoting to inventions and improved machinery, if they were not to be used for the benefit of the mass of the people? He took it that the judges in the Arbitration Courts took all that into consideration when considering claims for shorter hours. He was pleased to think they had taken that into consideration. He had always stood for discipline. He realised, when hon. members, including himself, lost their temper from time to time, that man was still man; therefore, from time to time, they found that some of the organised workers refused to abide by arbitration, or, in other words, resorted to direct action, because man was still man, and because they had been accustomed to a system of direct action for generations past. He had been trying to discover whether hon. members opposite believed in arbitration. The hon. member for Mirani was the first member of the so-called Country party to declare that one of the planks of their platform was arbitration. It was hard to know what the Nationalist wing of the Opposition believed in. The hon. member for Oxley, in dealing with the question, had made what appeared to him (Mr. Collins) a "yes-no" speech. The Labour party stood for arbitration. They had to deal with things as they were, and with mankind as it was. They had to realise that there was going to be a gradual growth, just the same as they looked forward to the time when they would be able to abolish war. If some nations combined together to arbitrate upon international affairs, they would still find some nation wanting to break through that proposal. The Labour party used to say that the method of settling industrial disputes by direct action or strikes was a brutal method. They still said so; but all the blame was not on the side of the workers. They would be safe in saying that in ninety cases out of a hundred, if not more, the workers were right. It was owing to the obstinacy of the employing class and the tyranny exercised from time to time by men who supervised the work of the employing class that they had these outbursts and men ceased work on the spur of the moment. He did not know if there was any real remedy for that, as man was still man. They had to ask themselves, what would be the position in Queensland or the Commonwealth if they had no Arbitration Courts? They could see what was going on in the other countries of the world where there were no Arbitration Courts. He would quote from "Stead's Review" of 27th September last, dealing with a dispute which took place in West Virginia, in the United States of America, and which was not settled by a strike, but by force. The article stated—

"Since hostilities began 200 miners have been reported killed."

They did not want to see that kind of thing in Queensland or in the Commonwealth. Although the Arbitration Court might not be perfect, they wanted to try and make it more perfect than it was at the present time, and, as with every other question, they could only advance step by step. He was just as militant a unionist and just as militant politically as any hon. member. They wanted to keep going forward, and not backward. He

[Mr. Collins.

would quote an extract from an article in "Stead's Review," called the "Miners' War in West Virginia," to show that a similar set of circumstances might have existed in Queensland if they had not had trade unions and an Arbitration Court. The article stated—

"Justice is administered by the coal companies. Constitutional rights are interpreted by the coal companies. Food and clothing are sold (though not exclusively) in company stores. The miners worship in a company church; are preached at by a company pastor; play pool in a company Young Men's Christian Association; gain education in a company school; receive treatment from a company doctor and hospital; died on company land. From the cradle to the grave they draw breath by grace of the sometimes absentee coalowner, one of whose visible representatives is the deputy sheriff, a public official in the pay of the coalowner."

In years gone by they had no method of settling disputes except resorting to direct action, because they had no Arbitration Courts. If they could not settle their industrial disputes by means of conciliation and arbitration, then there was no hope of settling their international disputes by a Court of Arbitration. They had, first of all, to spread the doctrine of arbitration. In his opinion, arbitration represented a more highly developed man or a more highly civilised man. They all knew the brutal methods of direct action. The hon. member for Mirani had spoken about the wealth production of this State. A few days ago he (Mr. Collins) went to the Government Statistician to get the total wealth production for Queensland for the past year. It was £2,000,000 greater than in the preceding year, yet they had the continual cry that, owing to shorter hours, and because men were going slow, the wealth production had fallen off, which was not true. The same argument was used when an effort was made to reduce the hours from twelve to ten per day, and then from ten to eight. The cry was raised that production would decrease and that the countries which adopted shorter hours were going to be ruined. Production had increased enormously.

Mr. MOORE: Production has decreased, but prices have increased.

Mr. COLLINS: Hon. members had said that there was a slump in prices last year; and, if that were so, how could there be a decrease in production? Considering the increase he had quoted, he had no doubt that production would continue to increase. He was not a pessimist who had no faith in Queensland or the Commonwealth. The Arbitration Court was not perfect, but it had done good work. Imperfect man could not make perfect laws. Neither could they get perfect decisions from Arbitration Courts. On one occasion he had said that he would much prefer to see representatives of the working classes appointed to the position of judges of the Arbitration Court if the workers were to get justice. There were reasons for criticising the judges of the court, because they had not got the wide experience that some of the workers had who had gone through the mill, and knew the hard struggle it was to live. But he kept the ideal before him, believing they were mounting higher and higher, and that they would reach the ideal in the near future. He believed something

like Tennyson said in his "Locksley Hall—Sixty Years After"—

"When the schemes and all the systems,
Kingdoms and Republics fall,
Something kindlier, higher, holier—all
for each and each for all?
All the full-brain, half-brain races, led
by Justice, Love, and Truth;
All the millions one at length with all
the visions of my youth?
All diseases quenched by Science; no
man halt, or deaf or blind;
Stronger ever born of weaker; lustier
body, larger mind?"

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): Far from defaming or condemning the Arbitration Court or the system which obtained to-day, he thought they had reason to be thankful that progress had been so smooth and that they had gone as far as they had, considering that there had only been five years in which a genuine attempt was made at arbitration in relation to fixing wages and conditions between the workers and the employers. Every unbiased person would admit that a great deal had been accomplished; but to measure how much had been accomplished it was necessary to go back over the last fifty years to account for the state of feeling in the minds of the workers when the Arbitration Act was first brought into operation. When the Government took office a war was on, but above and beyond all was an industrial war that had gone on for the last fifty years in Queensland between the employee and the employer. They were faced with implacable and ineradicable suspicion in the mind of the worker in relation to his employer, whom it was very difficult to meet in any shape or form. The employee had been used to thinking—and he was confirmed in that opinion by the attitude of employers and Governments in times past—that on all occasions when the employer backed by the State or an association of employers, could defeat him, or fool him, or betray him, that he would do so. In 90 per cent. of the cases the employee was right in coming to that conclusion, and that was why arbitration had had such a rough trial during the last five years under the present Government. They had to overcome that suspicion in the minds of the workers against the employers and against legislation dealing with employment and the fixation of wages before they would give the system of arbitration a trial. The old Liberal Government had passed the Wages Boards Act. That was a good Act, and it gave the worker some degree of justice, and was the means of adjusting industrial complications and preventing industrial disputes; but the minute that Act began to show by its operations an increase in wages to the workers in any great degree or a betterment in their conditions it was cast aside.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was Ministerial interference too.

Mr. HARTLEY: There was direct interference by the Minister, causing awards already given by a board to be annulled. The hon. member for Bulimba, who was then in charge of the department, took action to annul an award, in spite of the law of the State. That confirmed the workers in their opinion that nothing could be obtained from the masters except what they could extort by direct action or by strikes. That belief was still entertained by the workers, and

was justified by their experience of the employers. He hoped better relations would come about between employers and employees; but, while speeches like that of the hon. member for Mirani were

[5 p.m.] delivered, they could only expect antagonism on the part of the workers. The hon. member for Mirani dealt with the maritime strike, during which the Government attempted to bring in the Requisition of Ships Bill. No Arbitration Court could have got over that difficulty. It was the direct system of penalising unionists in the Southern States which led to the dispute. The New South Wales Government deliberately backed up the shipping companies, so as to prevent ships being sent to Queensland ports at a time when wheat was urgently required. The statements which the hon. member for Mirani made were regrettable; so also were the statements made by the hon. member for Oxley with regard to the Mount Morgan lockout. The hon. member said that he recommended more production. What would be the good of his (Mr. Hartley) going to the Mount Morgan miners—even if it were his province to do so—and saying, "I advise you to go back and work in the mine, because the only solution of the trouble is for you to get out 2 tons of copper instead of 1"? The miners would say, "What is the good of that? The copper is in Mount Morgan to-day because the price represented by our labour, and the extra amount which the company require, and which they term profit, cannot be got. What is the use of talking about more production, when half of what is produced cannot be marketed at the price required for labour, profit, and other expenses?"

There was another reason why hon. members went astray in reviewing the operations of the Arbitration Court. They lost sight of the fact that there were three parties in every dispute, and that the main party in many cases was not the employee. The general public, nine times out of ten, suffered most if a dispute was long continued. The Arbitration Court was not only established to adjudicate between employers and employees, but also to consider the welfare of the community. Very often, the court was unable to do anything in the interests of the employers or employees, because it would injure the interests of the community. The Arbitration Court was often condemned by many people, who expected arbitration to bring about a revolution in the life of the citizens of the State; but that was not the function of the Arbitration Court. The court was merely an instrument for adjusting and fixing the rate of wages as between employer and employee, and also the conditions of labour. After all, the real desire of the workers was not a high wage, but a wage which would enable them to have a certain amount of leisure to enjoy the good things of life, and not always to be mere draught animals in the scheme of industry. They could not expect the Arbitration Court to fix that. It did not matter how much the wages were increased; there were other matters not under the jurisdiction of the court which caused discontent to the worker in his daily sphere. Until they could eliminate the bad conditions that now existed, they could not expect any great degree of stability in the various industries. That was not only his opinion; he was reinforced by writers in various parts of the world.

Mr. Hartley.]

At 5.10 p.m.,

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. HARTLEY: He would quote an extract from a work by Mr. H. G. Wells, entitled, "An Englishman Looks at the World." Dealing with the labour unrest, the author said—

"Our country is, I think, in a dangerous state of social disturbance. The discontent of the labouring mass of the community is deep and increasing. It may be that we are in the opening phase of a real and irreparable class war."

Then, he went on to speak of the workman, his condition, and character—

"The workman of the new generation is full of distrust, the most demoralising of social influences. He is like a sailor who believes no longer either in the good faith or seamanship of his captain, and, between desperation and contempt, contemplates vaguely but persistently the assumption of control by a collective force-castle. He is like a private soldier obsessed with the idea that nothing can save the situation but the death of an incompetent officer. His distrust is so profound that he ceases not only to believe in the employer, but he ceases to believe in the law, ceases to believe in Parliament, as a means to that tolerable life he desires; and he falls back steadily upon his last resource of a strike, and—if by repressive tactics we make it so—a criminal strike. The central fact of all this present trouble is that distrust. There is only one way in which our present drift towards revolution or revolutionary disorder can be arrested, and that is by restoring the confidence of these alienated millions, who visibly now are changing from loyalty to the Crown, from a simple patriotism, from habitual industry, to the more and more effective expression of a deepening resentment."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect the quotation he is making with the vote under consideration.

Mr. HARTLEY: He was going to connect it. The writer was dealing with the question of the organisation and control of labour, and he was suggesting a remedy for the conditions which obtained. He said—

"This is a psychological question, a matter of mental states. Feats of legal subtlety are inopportune, arithmetical exploits still more so. To emerge with the sum of 4s. 6½d. as a minimum, by calculating on the basis of the mine's present earnings, from a conference which the miners and everybody else imagined was to give a minimum of 5s., may be clever, but it is certainly not politic in the present state of Labour feeling."

That was an authority in the old country, who was condemning the practices of many of the arbitrationists to-day; condemning the arithmetical stunts of the hon. member for Port Curtis, who, because certain costs and returns did not give a proportionate profit to the Mount Morgan Company, said that the workmen should accept a reduction of wages. Mr. Wells, dealing with a similar question, said—

"The real task before a governing class that means to go on governing is

[*Mr. Hartley.*

not just at present to get the better of an argument or the best of a bargain—"

Hon. members opposite thought that that was the point in an arbitration case—to get the best of the argument by hook or crook—

"but to lay hold of the imaginations of this drifting, sullen, and suspicious multitude, which is the working body of the country. What we prosperous people, who have nearly all the good things of life and most of the opportunity, have to do now is to justify ourselves. We have to show that we are indeed responsible and serviceable, willing to give ourselves, and to give ourselves generously, for what we have and what we have had. We have to meet the challenge of this distrust."

He said, later on—

"Half the money that goes out of England to Switzerland and the Riviera ought to go to the extremely amusing business of clearing up ugly corners and building jolly and convenient workmen's cottages—even if we do it at a loss."

There was an authority on the working man's position, who was not a working man himself, but was one of the leisured class, pointing out one of the bad effects in our system to-day which was militating against the successful operation of the system of arbitration. It was no use blaming the Arbitration Court for half the ills the workers had to put up with at the present time. The cause lay deeper, and was to be found in the system under which men had gained by various means—some reputable, some disreputable—control of a vast amount of money and property, and seemed to think that all that was required of them was to use it for their own aggrandisement and enjoyment, having no regard for the welfare of the worker. The worker, not only through the Arbitration Court, but through his unions and his Government, was demanding now the right to live, as regarded employment, leisure, culture, and all that made life worth living, on an equality with any other man, whether he was born a duke or the heir to millions. He was perfectly right in doing that. If arbitration were to be successful, it had to be approached by men with an unbiassed mind, both sides intending to do what was fair, and accepting the decision of the judge when their opinions were in conflict. If they thought to get the better of the other side by a species of arbitration sharper tricks, the result could not be lasting. Only when the decision was given on sound grounds and in good faith would industry run along smoothly and good relations exist between employer and employee.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): During the course of the debate something had been said in connection with the important matter of apprenticeship. The statement had been made by some hon. members opposite that the operations of the Arbitration Court were hindering boys from becoming apprentices, thereby causing a dearth of skilled workmen within the State. That was a very important matter to everyone who desired the future development of Queensland and Australia. He stood for the principle of teaching the boys of the State every trade and calling imaginable, in order to provide their own skilled artisans and make in their State articles which in many cases

were now being imported from elsewhere. Anything to improve the education of the boys—to give them facilities for learning trades and becoming highly skilled in those trades—should be encouraged. The Arbitration Court had done much to encourage that point of view. As a matter of fact, the Central Apprenticeship Committee had been formed by the Arbitration Court. The chairman was Mr. Morris, Director of Technical Instruction, and Mr. Wearne, Principal of the Central Technical College, was chairman of committees. That committee consisted of two representatives of the Trades Hall Council and two representatives of the employers. Again, there were group committees representative of each trade in the same proportion. It was the duty of the apprenticeship committee to see that the work of the Technical College was in harmony with the needs and requirements of the various trades. They encouraged the boys to go to the college. Those boys were then registered in the trade to which they desired to be apprenticed. The committee supervised their studies and had them apprenticed in a proper manner to employers in whatever trade or calling they selected. The principle was being encouraged by the Department of Public Instruction, and representatives of the employers and the unions generally were giving it their cordial support and assistance. Much improvement had been effected, and it would extend its benefits in the future. It had been a distinct success in the metropolitan area, and it was hoped that the system would be extended to the various portions of the State before very long. More had been done in Queensland than in any other State in the Commonwealth. A good deal remained to be done, but the committee had the matter well in hand.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): He did not think any fair-minded man would say that he was not in favour of arbitration. The difficulty with which they were faced at present was to make as effective and useful as possible the arbitration which existed in Australia to-day. The hon. member for Bowen thought amendments might be made which would improve the present Act. Everyone admitted that amendment of the Act was necessary, and could be made. The matter was a very difficult one to deal with in the way in which they would like to see it dealt with. An industry might not be in a flourishing condition, and might not be able to pay the rate of wage laid down by the Arbitration Court. Notwithstanding the fact that the produce of any particular industry had such a low value that it could not pay the award rate of wages, they were faced with the fact that the individuals engaged in that calling or industry required the same standard of comfort as those employed in any other industry. The difficulty was to adjust the difference in the wage. It would probably be somewhat unwieldy to take into consideration subsidiary interests or businesses which were drawing certain supplies from those industries which were not paying concerns, and find out if they were in a position to contribute something in order that the wage standard should be maintained in the industry which was not paying its way. Some industries could not stand the same rate of wages as others.

At 5.27 p.m..

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. TAYLOR: He believed that since arbitration had been introduced into Australia an honest attempt had been made to deal with the situation. As some hon. members had said, the system was practically in its infancy, and neither the employer nor the employee had yet been educated up to a recognition of its value and utility. Quite a lot of spade work probably would have to be done before both sides understood thoroughly what arbitration meant to them. The judges had to decide the cases on the evidence submitted to them. He thought it would be a long time before the Arbitration Court, presided over by a judge, would be done away with. There was not in the community a more competent man to deal with arbitration cases than an unbiassed judge, because he weighed carefully all the evidence, and on that evidence made his award. They did not always agree with the awards, just as in the Supreme Court they did not always agree with what the judges did; but, taking it by and large, the Arbitration Court judges did not make very many mistakes. The court dealt with the question of hours and wages. How could any man claim that the same wage which was fixed for a man who had a wife and three children should be paid to an unmarried man or youth? Could they honestly say that that was arbitration as they would like to see it? A man who had a wife and three children was a greater benefit to the community than an unmarried man who had not taken on the obligations of citizenship. In the Arbitration Court the principle obtained of awarding to the unmarried man the same wage as was awarded to the married man. The judge could not do anything else; but the basis of payment for a married man with a wife and three children should be altogether different from that in respect of an unmarried man, a youth, or a girl. That was where he thought their Arbitration Court was causing a lot of unemployment.

[5.30 p.m.] When he spoke in that strain last year and said that the awards were creating a considerable amount of unemployment, the Home Secretary interjected, "Yes, more than people think," or words to that effect.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Unless you provide a fund to which employers pay, and subsidise the workers with children, you would give preference of employment to single men as against married, because they would be getting lower wages.

Mr. TAYLOR: Something would have to be done to prevent that happening. They would probably have to limit the number of single men employed. The present basis of wages was unfair, but it was a difficult question to solve.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The only solution is to pay married men something extra out of the consolidated revenue.

Mr. TAYLOR: That might be a solution. The question bristled with difficulties, and one of the troubles from which arbitration was suffering was the difficulty of knowing how honestly and fairly to deal with such employees and not hamper and strangle industry at the same time.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you think industry would stand a scheme of that kind?

Mr. TAYLOR: He doubted if it would.

The HOME SECRETARY: I have seen it tried with disastrous results.

Mr. Taylor.]

Mr. TAYLOR: They stood up and said certain things and then reckoned that they had solved the problem, but in practice they often found themselves up against a stone wall and that they had created a greater evil than the one they were seeking to remedy.

The HOME SECRETARY: The human equation comes into it.

Mr. TAYLOR: Yes, as the hon. member for Bowen said a little while ago. It came very largely and very often into all such matters. There might have been—he did not say there had been—a time in the history of industrialism in Australia when there was a necessity for preference to unionists. But preference to unionists simply meant nothing more or less than preference to political organisations.

Mr. STOPFORD: It has turned out to have a totally different effect.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was his honest opinion. Only that week an application had been made to have preference to unionists in one trade set aside, and in evidence before Judge Macnaughton it was stated that men could not get admission to the union. Surely that was unfair.

Mr. STOPFORD: Was that a casual industry?

Mr. TAYLOR: No—the Storemen and Packers' Union. Judge Macnaughton had not given his award, but he suggested to the employing class that after men had been in their employ a fortnight it should be compulsory for them to join the union. In regard to unemployment one trouble was that a man who might be a member of one union obtained the offer of a job in some other calling but could not take it unless he joined the other union, which probably would not accept him on its books. All such things operated to make arbitration difficult for the judges, the employers, and the employees.

Mr. STOPFORD: That is an argument in favour of the One Big Union.

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not believe in the One Big Union. It would be one big tyranny, and one big calamity. The question of high or low wages in Australia had gone for ever. They were faced with a high cost of living and high wages, and the difficulty was to bring the two close together so that industry would continue to prosper and the employees receive a fair rate of wages. He had given a fair amount of thought to arbitration, and had tried to see a way out of the difficulties that existed, but he confessed he had been unable to solve the problem. However, he believed that by continually trying they would probably ultimately attain something of benefit to the whole community. He did not look upon discontent as a calamity. A man who was satisfied with his lot, or a nation that was content with its position, was in a decadent state, and the man who was not always satisfied with his rate of wages should not be regarded as being an unmixed evil in the community, because, if they were never striving for something better, there would be no progress at all.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): Most of them realised that they must have some means of bringing about a proper state of affairs between employer and employee, and they had to recognise that they must conserve the industries in which country people were engaged. The Arbitration Court

[*Mr. Taylor.*

made an award in the butter and cheese making industry in June, 1920, which was retrospective for seven or eight weeks and gave cheesemakers £4 12s. a week for not more than forty-eight hours a week, or more than nine hours in any one day. An award was made in April, 1921, by which cheesemakers were paid £5 a week. When the award was made in April last suppliers were getting anything from 10d. to 11d. per gallon for milk, and cheese was being sold at anything from 1s. 1½d. to 1s. 2d. per lb. To-day suppliers were getting from 4½d. to 6d. a gallon and cheese was being sold in the shops at from 7d. to 8d. per lb. He would like to know whether hon. members on the other side had exercised their minds on the reduction of the wages of the primary producers involved in those figures—and, after all, the money which a man received for his milk or cream was as much his wage as the payment to a cheesemaker or a casual hand about a factory. The Home Secretary stated that the position was largely due to readjustment after the war. Nobody could say that the primary producers were doing other than trying to adjust their business so as to carry on successfully and bring prosperity to the State; but, when the award said that they must pay a cheesemaker £5 per week whether they were getting 3d. or 8d. a lb. for their cheese, one could not but appreciate the fact that at the present time the cheese-making industry was in a parlous condition. They should certainly have some means whereby they could get the court to make an award dependent on the cost of production from period to period. So far as he understood the position, the cheese and butter manufacturers would have to appeal to the court for a reduction in wages, and he supposed that it would be said that the primary producers and the Country party were out at all times to lower wages. He said distinctly that they were not, but he said distinctly also that it was the duty of an award to fix a wage at which they could afford to produce and which would give them a small margin of profit. Nor had any of their other expenses been reduced in any shape or form, as would be seen from the following comparison:—

Goods.	PRICES.	
	June, 1920	June, 1921.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Large Cheese Cases, each	0 4 2	0 4 5
Large Cheese Bandage, per yard	0 1 4	0 1 5
Large Cheese Caps, per 1,000	4 0 0	3 10 0
Salt, "Mermaid," per ton	8 7 0	8 12 6
Rennet	40s. to 50s.	40s. to 52s. 6d.

At 5.40 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They were quite within their rights in saying that the award had cast upon the shoulders of the producers an enormous burden. It should be recognised that, although during the war period a certain rate of wages was paid, to-day they were getting lower prices for their meat and butter and cheese and all other primary products than they were during the years 1915 to 1919, and yet they were paying distinctly higher wages all round. People interested in cheese-manufacturing companies were faced

with the fact that they had to pay from eight to nine hours a week overtime, no matter how anxious they were to avoid it. The factories had to manufacture their cheese on Sunday as well as on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, and they could not prevent the payment of overtime, with the result that in some of the cheese factories a boy, who would be the son of a farmer supplying that particular factory, would be earning from £22 to £24 per month in wages, whilst his father and mother and the rest of the family, who were working on the dairy farm milking the cows, would be drawing from £20 to £22 per month. Under those conditions, was it possible to keep people home on the farms? Primary production was the foundation upon which their prosperity was built.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: No one is denying that.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: A boy of nineteen or twenty years of age would be earning from £22 to £24 per month, which would be more than his father and mother would earn from the dairy farm; and under those conditions it was absolutely impossible to expect men to go on the land, and it was not possible to ask men in all good faith to take up dairying or the cultivation of land as a living. Consequently, they would have to remodel their Arbitration Court system. The Minister had made mention of apprentices. In 1915 the Toowoomba Foundry Company were very keen upon the question of constructing motor works and agricultural implement works, but in 1916 and 1917 the awards that were made were so impossible from their point of view that they did not carry out their determination to start those works, and in 1917 they wiped out all idea of constructing agricultural machinery. The Toowoomba Foundry Company had stated that in the ironworkers' award the court limited the number of young people who might learn a trade and prohibited people over twenty-one years of age from acquiring skill in a trade. He believed that that statement was absolutely correct. It was the same in all industries. It did not matter whether a young fellow was efficient or otherwise, when he reached the age of twenty-one years he had to be paid a certain minimum wage. It did not matter whether he was a tradesman; so long as he said he knew a little bit of plumbing or carpentering and was twenty-one years of age, he had to be paid a certain standard wage. Under the present system they were abolishing all possible chance of bringing about a state of efficiency. He agreed with the Minister that efficiency was essential. They would be unable to get that efficiency if they were going to prevent a man of twenty-five or thirty years of age who so desired from becoming a plumber or a carpenter or taking up some other trade at that age. It was an unreasonable thing to say that a man should be paid a certain wage because he had reached a certain age. The same thing applied in other callings owing to the impossible conditions laid down by the arbitration awards. The hon. member for Bowen had stated that production was on the increase throughout Australia. He would say emphatically that that was not so. In the "Year Book" for New South Wales it was laid down that the total value of production in New South Wales in 1911 was £66,483,000, and in the year 1919-1920

it was £54,692,000. In 1911 New South Wales was producing to the value of £39 18s. 10d. per head, and in 1919-1920 only £27 7s. 2d. per head, or a difference of £12 11s. 8d per head. That did not spell prosperity. He was quite in accord with the desire of hon. members that a scheme should be evolved whereby they could bring about good feeling between the employer and the employee. Production had also decreased in Queensland. If they were going to continue to carry out the Arbitration Court awards, the Minister should give the matter consideration. The hon. gentleman had apparently given it a certain amount of consideration, but he had no one to ask for expert advice in regard to these matters. He did not believe that the Minister imagined that he knew all there was to be known in regard to the question of Arbitration Courts. To-day the butter, cheese, and other industries were in a parlous condition, but he (Mr. Roberts) quite realised that they had to work out their own salvation, and they were trying in the best possible way to work out that salvation; but, when they found that the Arbitration Court awards applying to their callings were imposing upon them an almost impossible burden, they could not help but admit that they had got a right to say that the Arbitration Court system had to be amended in some shape or form. He would make a suggestion to the Minister, though, perhaps, the hon. gentleman would say it was not economical. Personally, he did not think it would be anything else but economy if they spent another £10,000 or £12,000 if they could bring about a state of affairs that would prevent disputes, which not only cost the workers hundreds of thousands of pounds but also cost the producers hundreds of thousands of pounds. It was impossible for one man to sit on a bench and arrive at a conclusion that was going to give satisfaction to both sections of the community so far as the primary producers were concerned. It was absolutely impossible for an Arbitration Court judge to sit and take evidence and give a fair and just judgment on the evidence adduced. Contrary evidence was given by witnesses, and it was a most difficult thing unless the judge was au fait with all the workings of the particular industry for him to give a fair and just judgment. He would suggest to the Minister that three experts—men eminently able to give advice and to act as an advisory board—should be appointed to collect evidence, and that subdivisional advisory committees should be created to collect evidence in regard to any matter that was going before the Arbitration Court. The Government could pay the men 200 guineas, the same as they had paid the Commissioners who had carried out the work of the redistribution of electorates. Those subdivisional committees could deal with the cheese industry, the dairying industry, the pastoral industry, the goldmining, or coalmining, or any other industry. The men to be appointed could be au fait with the working of the particular industry they were called upon to make investigation into, and when they got the facts and figures together they could then transfer that information to the advisory board of three experts, who would go fully into the matter and place their conclusions before the Arbitration Court judge, and upon that evidence the judge could give his decision.

Mr. DASH: The Act makes provision for that now.

Mr. J. H. C. Roberts.]

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It had never been done. Unemployment to a very great extent was due to the fact of the impossible conditions placed upon the different industries by the Arbitration Court awards. The hon. member who had just interjected thought he knew a good deal about the pastoral industry. He would like to know from the hon. member how many young men were turned away from the different stations when they reached the age of twenty-one years because the stations could not pay the Arbitration Court awards. Those men were drifting about the country looking for work just at the very age when they would be made either men or wasters. When a young fellow left school and found himself unemployed when he was nineteen, twenty, or twenty-one years of age and found that it was difficult for him to get into harness and work he became, more or less, a man who did not like work, and became, more or less, a menace to the State. He hoped the Minister would realise that there was going to be a very serious time ahead with regard to the Arbitration Court.

The next difficulty was in regard to the wages to be paid to butter and cheese factory employees. That would be a question that was giving concern to the very best brains they had in the State. It was all very fine to lay down the dictum that, unless an industry could pay a living wage for a man, wife, and three children, it should go out of existence. That wage applied also to the single man who had no responsibilities, and that had to be very considerably altered. To-day the people whose wages were being considerably reduced were the producers of foodstuffs. He hoped that, when an application was made to the court for a reduction in wages in some of the industries in which primary producers were engaged, those industries would receive due consideration from the Arbitration Court, and the community as a whole. Some people believed in arbitration while others said, "Let us wipe it out altogether"; others, again, said, "We desire to revert to the wages board system or to have some other system whereby we can protect the workers." He appealed to the Government, whilst they were protecting the workers, to include in the category of workers the primary producer, and to see that he received the consideration to which he was entitled.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. member for Pittsworth had said that, as a result of industrial awards, the butter and cheese industries were in a parlous condition. That was a very unfair statement to make. During the last few years the farmers had been doing exceedingly well. He was going to give quotations from newspapers with regard to the balance-sheets of co-operative companies, which would show how fair the Government were to the farmers. They had guaranteed the farmers 8s. per bushel for their wheat; yet they were told that, through the operation of Arbitration Court awards, farmers were not doing well, and that the butter and cheese farmers were in a parlous condition. He would first refer to the Downs Butter Factory. The "Daily Mail" of 1st instant had the following report:—

"Toowoomba, Friday.—The sixteenth annual general meeting of the Downs Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited, was held in the Masonic Hall this morning,

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The business of the meeting was to receive the directors' and auditors' reports and statement of accounts for the year ended 30th June, 1921, to elect three directors in lieu of Messrs. Harris, Morwood, and Russell; and to elect auditors.

"The chairman expressed pleasure at seeing the large, influential, and representative gathering. It spoke well for the importance of the Downs Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited. He stressed the fact that the present year was a record for the year—as the auditors' report would show. The turnover had more than doubled during the past year. He congratulated the members and shareholders on the splendid season just experienced. Continuing, the chairman recalled the early days of the company and the old pioneers who, sixteen years ago, helped to bring the company into being, and he regretted that many were not present that day. Every shareholder should be proud of the magnificent business which they had built up, and of the business done during the past season. He hoped it would continue, but he thought prices would fall. On account of the fall in London prices and the discontinuance of the butter pool, he thought they would have to accept lower prices for primary produce.

"The annual report stated—Consequent on the good season in the latter part of the period under review, and the high prices obtained for your produce, the result both from a production and monetary point of view is a record. The total turnover for the year was £797,069 19s. 9d., of which amount the store is responsible for £106,212 8s. 1d. The total quantity manufactured at each factory was—Butter—Toowoomba 2,002,715 lb., Miles 510,732 lb., Clifton 408,382 lb., Dalby 1,872,044 lb., Crow's Nest 864,616 lb., total, 5,658,489 lb., or 2,526 tons 2 cwt. 25 lb., being an increase over that of last year of 1,482 tons 8 cwt. 23 lb. Cheese—Hodgson's Vale 180,926 lb., Westbrook 261,790 lb., Koon dai 201,620 lb., Jondaryan 181,291 lb., Gowrie Junction 233,510 lb.; total, 1,109,137 lb., or 495 tons 3 cwt. 1 lb., the increase being 274 tons 18 cwt. 3 qr. 13 lb. Payments to suppliers in 1920 were £170,186 14s. 2d. (butter), £18,613 9s. 5d. (cheese); and in 1921 £517,544 17s. 3d. (butter), £48,941 0s. 1d. (cheese)."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What do you want to show?

Mr. BRENNAN: He was going to show that, as a result of industrial awards, the butter and cheese industries were not suffering. They were more prosperous under a Labour Government than they ever had been before. They were giving the farmers the opportunity of having their own co-operative concerns and being their own masters. By reason of the legislation which this Government had passed, they were doing much better than they had ever done before.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: On account of the war and the good seasons, but not on account of the Labour Government.

Mr. BRENNAN: He would now refer to the Wide Bay Dairy Company. The "Daily Mail" of 3rd October instant said—

"According to the official figures supplied to the thirteenth half-yearly meeting

of shareholders in the Wide Bay Co-operative Dairy Company, Limited, the output of butter at both factories (Gympie and Cooroy) easily constitutes a record. This shows what a favourable season the dairying industry has experienced."

He would now give a quotation from the "Daily Mail" of 7th September last with regard to Gympie—

"BIG CREAM CHEQUES.

"The big cream cheques which the dairy farmers have been receiving for a long time past are practically all spent in the town, whereas in the mining days a lot of the dividends went away from the city. The miners are good spenders, but mining is a fickle pursuit, and, given anything like a good season, dairying means that regular money is circulated in the town. The prosperity of the dairying is reflected in the business premises of the city. In recent years there have been big improvements and extensions to shops, and to-day there are shops in Mary street which would do credit to Queen street. The beauty is that the lead given by the more enterprising business men is being followed by so many others. In fact, the face of the business portion of the city is undergoing a great change, and one for the better. Even if mining became quite dead, it would not matter to the city, for dairying is its mainstay."

He would now turn to the Farmers' Co-operative Distributing Company of Queensland, which had a turnover of over £1,500,000. The "Daily Mail" of 21st September last contained the following report:—

"Dairying is making rapid headway, and record supplies of cream are arriving at the local butter factory. Even with the reduced prices of butter the dairy farmer is reaping rich results. For the year ended 30th June the local butter factory paid over £59,000 to cream suppliers, and it is likely that the distributions for the present year will exceed that amount."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Now give us a year of drought.

Mr. BRENNAN: His advice to the farmers was to go in for the erection of silos, which he thought was their only hope in times of drought.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will not discuss silos on this vote. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: He did not mean to discuss the matter, but they could not give that advice too often to the farmers, as the success of the farmers would lead to the success of other industries.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did they take your advice?

Mr. BRENNAN: They had been following his advice. He paid the award rate of wages when he harvested his crop of wheat. Off 10 acres of land he cleared over £50, which he gave to the Toowoomba Hospital.

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

Mr. GREEN (*Toowoomba*): He wished to deal with the question of arbitration in its relation to Queensland. They all recognised that industrial unrest was a deadly menace

to the community. He had listened attentively to the speeches made during the debate. He was struck with the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley, not only on this vote, but also recently on the want of confidence motion. Whether they agreed with the hon. member or not, they must all recognise the value of the conclusions he came to. Personally he did not agree with the conclusions which the hon. member had come to, but the hon. member showed that he realised the importance of this subject and had the ability to place the position before the Committee. They could not fail to realise that industrial strikes were a deadly menace to the community, and they should all endeavour to do something to prevent the recurrence of strikes, which would bring disaster and cause unemployment. In this connection, he would like to quote the following address which he had the privilege of giving at the Australian Natives' Association jubilee, in which he dealt with the question of unrest, and pointed out the deadly menace which was facing the State at the present time:—

"We have a rich and wonderful country capable of supplying all our needs—capable of being developed so that it might bring forth a wonderful increase.

"Our undeveloped resources, our lack of co-operation in promoting industrial pursuits, our want of unity in endeavouring to bring general prosperity, constitute a serious danger to our national existence. If self and self interest is to be the predominant force in our national life, then we are going to prove unworthy of our rich inheritance and endanger our very life existence.

"I feel that if the spirit of courage and patriotism as manifested by our leaders in the past is still maintained, then we will still be a potent force in preventing this calamity.

"Perhaps one of the greatest dangers which threaten us is the continuance of industrial strife. I have no hesitation in saying that it is a deadly menace to this fair land of ours, and that in recent years it has done more to ruin the prosperity and welfare of the Commonwealth of Australia than years of drought would have done.

"We cannot deny that labour has two fundamental rights—the right to combine, to secure better terms for its one asset, and the right to strike. Combination is now universally recognised, and it has brought untold good, not only for labour, but for the community as a whole.

"But, in its present form, the right to strike is abused. It has fallen into the hands of unscrupulous leaders, and has become a menace to society and to Australia's welfare.

"It has become for labour itself a form of suicide.

"The two recent maritime strikes cost the working man in wages alone a loss of £6,000,000, and official statistics show that since 1913 strikes represent in the Commonwealth as a whole the loss of 17,015,747 working days and of nearly £10,000,000 in wages, and this monstrous loss in six years falls principally upon the workers themselves; and this, of course, represents only the direct loss of the striker.

Mr. Green.]

"Therefore, I say they have become a national scandal and national disaster threatening Australia, and we should be prepared to recognise this and discuss methods whereby these disasters might be counteracted without destroying the genuine working man's fundamental right in this direction, for, after all, the typical Australian worker is not a wastrel or an adventurer. He is better educated than the British workman: in purity of type he has an advantage over the American. He has in a high degree both sense and character, and he is desirous of recognising his responsibility to his native land.

"To solve the difficulty of overcoming these disasters should be a work demanding the most serious attention of all sections of the community, and is a work worthy of the serious consideration of such an association as this."

It was because he recognised that that the hon. member for Oxley had brought those matters prominently before the Chamber. In having done so the hon. member had manifested in the truest spirit that he was endeavouring to solve the difficulties with which they were faced.

Mr. HARTLEY: His chief recommendation was to reduce wages.

Mr. GREEN: One of the things which the hon. member had advocated was the wages board system. He (Mr. Green) had no hesitation in saying that the Arbitration Court could do better than the old wages board system. Whatever the wages board was capable of doing, the Arbitration Court also could do. Another suggestion made by the hon. member was that Parliament, being the supreme authority, might consider the question of fixing a basic wage. Anyone who had had much to do with political and parliamentary life would surely oppose such a suggestion as that. They wanted as little political interference as possible in their industrial life. But they must recognise there was a weakness in connection with the present Arbitration Court. The workers themselves thought something was wanting. He felt that the Arbitration Court was the right principle. It was only commencing, and there was no reason why they should not improve it so that justice would be meted out to all. One of the chief reasons why he considered the Arbitration Court had not been as successful as it might have been, was that owing to prosperous years and good prices the judges had followed the line of least resistance. Employers had not cared, because they had simply passed on the cost, and the community had had to bear the burden. The hon. member for Mackay said that in the Arbitration Court the general community was considered. One of the greatest disadvantages of the court was that in its awards the community was not considered. To be perfect and fulfil all its functions for the benefit of the whole of the people of the State, the Arbitration Court should be guided by the principle of considering the community in addition to the employers or employees. Further, he did not think the industries of the State had been given consideration. When awards had been given at a time when industries were prosperous, consideration had not been given to the eventual effect upon those industries. If, in the Arbitration Court, there was manifested the spirit of conciliation which the

[Mr. Green.

court was intended to represent, which said, "Come, let us reason together," greater good would be done. The practice in the past had been "Come, let us fight together." The employer was fighting against the employee, and the employee against employer. Until that spirit of enmity was overcome they would fail to obtain their objective. He was keenly disappointed with the response made by the Minister to the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. gentleman started off by saying that that hon. member was always willing to suggest improvements to assist the Government; and then he immediately started to abuse the Opposition and work in as much political propaganda as he could.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You have the idea that your side can attack the workers and the industrial awards all the session without a reply. I am going to take every opportunity to reply to those attacks.

Mr. GREEN: Other Government members following the Minister adopted the same line of discussion until, in the speech of the hon. member for Bowen, they had a speech on which that hon. member could be congratulated by everyone. What was the Government's attitude towards arbitration? Judging by their actions, he had no hesitation in saying that they hated the court like poison. By regulation they withdrew from the operations of the court their own employees who were receiving upwards of £300 per annum. He had a letter from the Public Service Association protesting against their having been cut out from the privileges of the court.

The TREASURER: What limit would you suggest?

Mr. GREEN: In the "Daily Mail" of the 16th instant, they found the following paragraph—

"The combined railway unions, like the rest of the unions associated with the public service, are dissatisfied with the action of the Government in reimposing the £300 embargo. Speaking of the matter on Saturday, a prominent official of one of the railway unions said that the effect of the embargo was that a railway man on the basic wage of £4 5s. a week in No. 4 district (Northern Division), that was from Hughenden outwards, was precluded from going to the court because his allowances brought his salary up to or beyond the £300 mark. In No. 3 district a man who earned £8 over the basic wage, as the result of overtime, Sunday time, or in any other manner, was also precluded from obtaining the benefits of the court. The embargo embraced anyone who earned £300, not solely by wages or salary, but by reason of the fact that he was stationed in a certain part of the State, his allowances would bring him to the £300 mark. In fact, it was stated that whereas railway men in the coastal district could approach the court, men in the same grade in the Western district, by reason of the embargo, were unable to do so. The combined railway unions have written to the Premier (Mr. Theodore), expressing opposition to the Government's decision, but so far only a formal reply has been received."

He had no hesitation in saying that the Government representatives in the court

opposed the awards more strongly than the private employers did. He would read what the "Sun" said in regard to the award given to the nurses—

"There should be some explanation why a Labour Government, professedly out to better the condition of the workers, did, in the recent proceedings through the Under Secretary (Mr. Gall), consistently and with emphasis, on their behalf, oppose every clause of the claim, irrespective of its financial aspect. Surely it is not claimed that the Government is going to suffer unless a nurse is fined for breakages without appeal, or that seventy hours is a reasonable weekly period of work, or that nurses should not be allowed out when off duty, for fear they might be wanted, etc., etc. This question demands an answer. Are all the claims of the Government for social recognition 'hot air'? Are their main activities confined to 'hitting the bloated capitalist,' and then, as in the recent arbitration, proceed to show him how to down the humbled and most enslaved of all professional workers—the nurses."

They on the Opposition side had been accused of opposing arbitration, of endeavouring to down the workers, and of desiring to bring about a system of low wages. It was only right that they should refute those statements and show that the Government were a little bit worse than they charged the Opposition with being. They on that side also had been accused of wanting to increase hours, and by that means increase the output to make industries pay. He would give a quotation from the "Daily Standard" in regard to the question of increased production—

"It is to be regretted that the employees in the Baralaba State Coal Mine did not earlier offer, and make good, their suggestion that the rate of production should be increased by 20 per cent. The Minister for Mines put the facts of the case fairly before them and pleaded that they should do sufficient work in order to prevent him being put in the ridiculous position of working an 8-foot seam of coal and putting it on the trucks at a loss of 2s. 9d. per ton.

"The Minister might have ordered this to be done on pain of immediate dismissal."

That was practically what Opposition members had said—that if they wanted industries to pay for themselves when the market value of the products of those industries had fallen, they must increase the output. They found also that there had been a 10 per cent. reduction in wages at the Ipswich workshops. They could either call it a 10 per cent. reduction, or retrenchment.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member best discuss that matter on the Railway Estimates.

Mr. GREEN: When any hon. member on that side suggested something which he felt would help to relieve the acute position existing, they had thrown at them for political purposes the accusation that they wanted to reduce wages and abolish the Arbitration Court.

The HOME SECRETARY: You don't want us to oppose any log.

Mr. GREEN: He stood for a man getting a fair living wage and working under decent conditions. Every hon. member of the Opposition was absolutely honest in that respect. Not only did he want the working man to be happy and contented, but he wanted industry to grow and the State to develop and be prosperous. Hon.

[7.30 p.m.] members opposite should realise that these suggestions were made in all honesty and in an endeavour to relieve an acute position and to bring about a state of affairs that would be a credit to everyone who was assisting to administer the great State of Queensland.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): He believed that every member of the Committee was anxious so to conduct the affairs of Queensland as to bring about conditions satisfactory to the people employed in her industries. It was the solemn duty of the Committee to endeavour to do that. It had been said that hon. members on the Opposition side were not in favour of arbitration, whereas they were really returned on that policy, as he would prove by reference to a policy speech made just before the last election. The following sentence was in it:—

"The growth of industry and the frequently recurring troubles clearly point to the fact that it is absolutely essential in the best interests of the State, as a whole, that provision should be made for the creation of a Minister of Labour, one who would have sole charge of affairs and whose chief duty would be—

(a) To endeavour to prevent strikes and lockouts.

(b) Encourage the settlement of industrial disputes by arbitration and prevent direct action.

(c) Encourage the development of conciliatory measures, and also co-operation between employer and employee."

One of the dangers which had been and probably would continue to beset Queensland—although he hoped not—was the constant recurrence of strikes, which had frequently meant a very great deal of dislocation and suffering—suffering which, generally speaking, fell upon those least able to bear it, more particularly the women and children. Therefore it was the duty of any party to seek to relieve the disabilities that existed in the relations between employer and employee. It was essential that no wedge should be driven in to make any differences greater than they were. He was a great believer in bringing people together to discuss difficulties as they arose, and he held that, if that were done, they would very largely avert the dangers threatening the community. The same policy speech included the following paragraph:—

"I need not remind the public of Queensland that the advent of the Labour party into the control of Queensland's affairs has not brought about less industrial trouble, but rather since their advent to office, taking one year with the other, strikes have been more frequent and the industrial troubles have been greater, but without in any way attempting to labour that point, it is known that such strikes bring with them, irritation, loss upon those least able to bear it, and especially upon women and children,

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and cast extreme suffering upon these and upon those who have not contributed towards the trouble."

He was a believer in arbitration, because he believed that by that means they would help to relieve some of the difficulties which existed. In that connection it seemed to him essential that the person who presided over the court had a thorough knowledge of the business affairs with which he had to deal. It was no reflection on the Committee to say that probably one or two hon. members would be able to deal with the question of law in a way that no other hon. members could. Some of them would find themselves in a very grave difficulty if they had to deal with questions of law, simply because they did not understand them. There were other members who specialised in financial matters and social matters, just as men specialised in the ordinary avenues of life. One of the weaknesses of Australia in the past had been due to the fact that the men appointed to deal with industrial questions did not understand the particular industries concerned, and, without in any way reflecting on their Arbitration Court judges, he held that judges were sometimes not the best men to preside over industrial difficulties, because they could not possibly be seized with the practical part of the business. It was also necessary that the representatives of the employers or employees should go to court with the distinct desire to deal with difficulties as they cropped up. To-day people were desperately anxious for work, and let nobody get into his mind the idea that every employer, or the majority of employers, or even one-tenth of them, was actuated by other than feelings of kindness towards the men who wanted work; but, frequently in a time of crisis such as that through which they were now passing, an employer was prevented from helping such men from a variety of causes. One was that they could not say to a man who came to them for work that he might start at the same rate as the man who was working at a weekly wage. There were things that needed adjustment along such lines, and he hoped that Arbitration Courts and industrial awards would not go in the direction of penalising men who wanted work, as they did to-day. A man came into his office only this week, a strapping fellow, and told him that he had a job to go to, that he was willing to join the union concerned, but he was not allowed to do so because there were already so many on the books that they would not accept any more. Was it in accordance with the spirit of British fairplay that a man who wanted work and could get it should be told he could not work, so that he had to go and get relief?

Mr. WEIR: He was pulling your leg.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not. The hon. member knew, or should know, that it was correct, and that it was not an isolated case.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What union was that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was sorry to say it was not only so in one union. In his own business recently they found themselves up against it somewhat, and they were told in connection with their draymen—he did not know whether they were unionists or not—that, if they went off and were non-unionists, the firm could not re-engage them. Was that right or fair?

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

Mr. DUNSTAN: I know that your party boycotted the workers before there was any union.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member did not know anything of the kind. The test should be a man's ability and willingness to work, and no Arbitration Court should prevent a man from getting bread and butter if he could get a job.

The HOME SECRETARY: Then why fix the price of wheat?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member would find that every day different prices were given for wheat, because quality was the test. He was referring to wheat that was other than of fair average quality, which was perhaps slightly tainted with smut, and for which perhaps 2s. 6d. might be given in one case and up to 5s. 6d. in another. The policy speech from which he had quoted contained also the following declaration:—

"The National party would so seek to govern as to insure the due observance by all parties of industrial awards believing as they do on every occasion when awards are not observed, it is having a weakening effect on arbitration, and will help to break it down."

Members of the Nationalist party were returned on that policy.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What policy is that—low wages?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member belonged to a party under whom there were no wages, but unemployment in every direction.

The HOME SECRETARY: You fought us for three months once for 25s. 6d. a week and twelve hours a day.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Home Secretary sometimes lost his head. The position in Queensland was that, as a result of the return of the present Government, there were no wages. Whether they took the policy of the then leader of the Nationalist party or the policy of the party as now laid down, it would be found that arbitration was distinctly included.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member for Toowoomba sought to reply to the hon. member for Pittsworth by quoting the balance-sheets of certain co-operative cheese factories. He did not see what that had to do with the question. It only illustrated that co-operative companies were able to carry on business in a far better way than the Government. In any case, those balance-sheets were for last year, when the suppliers were getting 10d. a gallon for their milk whereas to-day they were getting 4d. and 5d. The hon. member for Toowoomba might be a very good farmer, but he was a very poor lawyer, because he said he paid the arbitration award rate for his farm labour, when there was no award and never had been in connection with the industry.

Mr. BRENNAN: There was. I paid the same as was paid to the construction workers at Willowburn.

Mr. MOORE: Did the hon. member for Toowoomba think that, if he told the farmer that he paid the award rates, the farmer would be so simple that he would not know that there was no award rate in the agricultural industry? One difficulty in connection with the Arbitration Court was the way in which it was managed. They had the paid secretary of a union making application for

a new award whilst half of the members of the union did not know that a fresh award was being asked for. The secretary had not very much to do except, perhaps, to go to the court, and he stood to lose nothing whichever way the case went. If no increase was granted he was no worse off, and if an increase was granted so much the better. The employees engaged in the industry should decide whether there should be any variation of the award, and it should not be left to a paid union secretary in Brisbane to go to the court whenever he pleased to do so. At the beginning of the year they did not know in their industries what variations of the award were going to be asked for during the year. One of the principles of the Industrial Arbitration Act was conciliation, but conciliation had dropped out altogether, and it meant now that every case had to be fought in the court and each side was trying to take every point against the other. He would quote what the Right Hon. J. R. Clynes had to say—

"We hear almost daily of something relating to workers in the mines, in cotton mills, engineering workers, on the railways, and in transport services. These great divisions of trade exist either in the nature of national industries, or in such strength of working-class organisation that they are bound to be kept more or less in the public eye. In these trades the workers have not adopted the precise form of industrial council recommended in the Whitley report. All the same, contact is maintained between the organised work and the organised employees in many of these trades and all manner of questions are settled between them week by week.

"Great as are these big industries, it is outside them that large numbers of wage-earners are employed. Millions of men and women earn their living in businesses in which trades unionism has been established only in recent years and about two and a-half million such workers are now covered by joint industrial councils.

"This work cannot go on without improving very materially the spirit in which future industry is to be conducted."

That was what they wanted to-day. The wages board system provided that to a very considerable extent, and, though that system had many defects, he did not think it had nearly as many as the Arbitration Court system had. To-day they were faced with perpetual variations of awards.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What kind of tribunal would you set up?

Mr. MOORE: He would establish a wages board for each industry or an industrial council.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That can be done under the Act now; and in the only case in which it was done the Employers' Federation appealed against the decision of the board.

Mr. MOORE: Because there was an appeal in one case it did not prove that the Act was bad.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Under the present Act an industrial tribunal can be established for any particular industry.

Mr. MOORE: It was absolutely useless the judge telling the representatives to meet him in friendly conference.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is incorrect. The coal-miners have had a board ever since the Act came into operation.

Mr. MOORE: Conferences were absolutely useless. He had attended one or two. One side would put its log on the table and say, "We stand by that."

Mr. GLEDSON: That is incorrect.

Mr. MOORE: What they wanted was something more stable, so that they would know where they stood from one year's end to the other—which they did not know now. The only case in which the financial position of an industry was taken into consideration was in the case of the Railway Department, where the judge said that he did not think he could award the rates that he thought the employees should have, owing to the financial position of the Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: When did the judge say that?

Mr. MOORE: The judge made those remarks when framing the railway award last year and again this year.

The judge said that the financial position of the country would not allow of it. When an ordinary manufacturing industry went before the court, it did not matter whether the financial position was bad or not, the court simply said, "You have to pay the rate of wages I award, and, if you cannot pay, then you will have to close down." The principle adopted in the railway case should be adopted in other industries.

Mr. WEIR: How do you propose to ascertain the financial position of an industry? The hon. member knows the evidence that is given before the court.

Mr. MOORE: The court had power to obtain whatever evidence it required. Some of the evidence given before the court was ridiculous. Evidence was given in Toowoomba by a man to the effect that he fed to his horse three bags of chaff, two bags of corn, and a bag of bran per week, and that was never questioned. The court could obtain any evidence it required, and could call for documentary evidence if necessary.

Mr. WEIR: How could the court investigate the books of a company with the present Companies Act in force?

Mr. MOORE: The books of the Mount Morgan Company were audited, and the statement of the company was found to be correct, and then hon. members opposite said that the auditors did not go back far enough. Because the auditors could not find what the unions wanted them to find, hon. members disagreed with them. The court had ample power to ascertain whether an industry could stand the wages asked for or not. If they went along making awards as they had done up to the present time, they were going to close down industries in Queensland and create more unemployment.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (Warwick): He was of the opinion that the Government were waiting for a lead from that side of the Chamber as to what they should do in connection with arbitration. It was evident to most minds that the Government were ready, and felt the intense need of giving immediate attention to the question of arbitration. The whole of their economic life at the present time was affected, and it needed a very sane outlook in connection with the arbitration laws of the land. He would not indicate for

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a moment that he was averse to arbitration or conciliation. He knew of nothing else that could take the place of arbitration and conciliation in this State, now they had gone so far. Wages boards might do it. There must be a court of appeal for matters in dispute, and the only authority to which they could refer matters on which the employer and the employee were divided, and in disputes between man and man, was the court that they now possessed. When they found that disputes had increased, they must of necessity give consideration to thoughts on some broader lines. No matter how wise, judicious, or conciliatory the judges might have been, and however temperamentally fitted they might have been supposed to be, they had in the great bulk of instances largely failed. It was absurd to think that any one man should have in his cranium as a result of knowledge brought before him that close touch with the life of their industries that would enable him to come to a wise conclusion regarding the innumerable matters that were placed before him. If they were to improve the industrial life of the community, they would have to widen the court to a very large extent. Why should they not, when various disputes arose, make of it a round-table matter by introducing the employers and employees to the bench, when they and the judge could give the matter consideration? Then they would have the representative of the employees doing something to better the employee or the union, and they would have the master mind who was in touch with the various side issues in connection with the making of an award. He was convinced that a solution of a great many of their troubles might be found in the extending of the constitution of the Arbitration Court in the direction he suggested. They found that, instead of going from good to better, they had gone from bad to worse. Knibbs's figures substantiated his statement that they were not improving. The arbitration laws had not helped to curtail disputes, but had rather helped to encourage them. According to Knibbs's figures, the number of working days lost in Queensland because of the industrial disputes were—

" 1915	...	...	19,324
1916	...	...	170,690
1917	...	...	317,699
1918	...	...	183,883
1919	...	...	536,661 "

Last year the number had fallen to 68,293. There was evidence that, with the exception of last year, instead of the Arbitration Court having brought about a lessening in the number of disputes, they had very largely increased. The monetary loss incurred through industrial disputes had also increased during the same period.

At 8 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. C. P. BARNES: In 1919, the monetary loss to wage-earners was £327,527. They should all try to bring about a better feeling in the community, and to lessen the number of disputes which had been disfiguring their industrial life and interfering with the development of the State for so many years. Again and again a dispute had arisen at a critical time in an industry. A boat, for instance, might have been waiting to take meat aboard, and a strike took place. The shippers got tired of waiting, and the

boat had to go away without its cargo of meat. That kind of thing was still going on, and it was necessary for them to arrive at some solution in order to prevent its continuance. It was evident that the Government felt the necessity of some consideration being given to the matter of wages awards. The Secretary for Mines expressed himself in very trenchant language in connection with the Balaraba dispute. The Chief Secretary also expressed his views fearlessly in connection with Mount Morgan, and, while other members of the Cabinet might have differed with him, he was bold enough to indicate what the workers of Mount Morgan should do. The Government also were taking up the same attitude in connection with the Railway Department and the Department of Public Instruction. Something had to be done to stop the incessant demands which were being made for new awards. He could not imagine anything more unseemly than the increase in the award sought by the unions in connection with the railway workers recently. The railways were practically only returning $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., as against $6\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. interest which was being paid for the money borrowed, yet the railway unions made claims which, if granted, would have meant a further outlay by the Railway Department of £1,200,000 per annum. In order to show how unreasonable the demands of the unions were, it would be as well to read part of the evidence given by Mr. Steer in this connection, as reported in the "Courier" of 14th September last—

"In 1920-21 the department earned £5,279,000, while the working expenses were £5,048,000, leaving a net revenue of only £231,000, equal to 10s. 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per cent. upon the capital invested in railways now open for traffic. The interest charge was £1,812,000, so there was a loss of £1,581,000 for the year; notwithstanding this, rates and fares have not been increased for nearly two years, as to do so would act detrimentally to country residents. Business has recently diminished considerably. During the six months ended 30th June last, 900,000 fewer train miles were run than in the previous half-year, and the cash takings were £406,000 less. In the last two months (July and August) the receipts were £88,000 less, and the expenditure £39,000 greater, than the same months of last year, as although we have fewer hands employed, and 239,000 fewer train miles were run, the saving was more than counterbalanced by award increases to the staff. The first award operated from 1st July, 1917, and since then the length of line has increased by 10 per cent., the number of employees by 4 per cent., revenue 33 per cent., and working expenses 69 per cent., while the net revenue is 72 per cent. less. The increases in the minimum adult salaries or wages for various positions are as follows:—Clerks 91 per cent., station-masters 82 per cent., night officers 92 per cent., porters 74 per cent., shunters 83 per cent., guards 85 per cent., drivers 62 per cent., firemen 80 per cent., mechanics 81 per cent., and fettlers 77 per cent. The award increases from July, 1917, amount in the aggregate to nearly £500,000 per annum, and the further increases now asked for by the Queensland Railway Union (including shorter

[*Mr. G. P. Barnes.*]

hours and extra pay for night work) amount to approximately £1,200,000 per annum."

With those facts uppermost, the unions asked for a new award which would further increase the expenses of the Railway Department by £1,200,000 per annum. Although the Government might not indicate their true feelings, they knew that that condition of things could not continue to exist. He would suggest that the Arbitration Court, so far as new awards were concerned, should have a long holiday. Every consideration should be given to the betterment of various matters; but, if their industries were to remain stable, a stop would have to be put to the incessant clamour which was being made for new awards. Hon. members opposite knew that what he had said was correct. The judges in the courts were also expressing themselves in no uncertain way in connection with this question. Mr. Justice Powers, speaking in the Federal Arbitration Court in Melbourne, on 22nd September, with regard to the basic wage, after a long reference to the existing conditions, said—

"The figures as to the reduced output with better machinery are startling. The countries in which the workers produce the most—that is, who do the fairest day's work—can and do pay the best wages. That was the case before the war, and it will continue to be so. The men who believe that less work by each employee must necessarily mean more employment are wrong. Every worker must do as good work as the workers do in other civilised countries. The standard of living must come down in keeping with the standard of work performed. On the whole of the facts before me, I cannot help asking whether the executives of the combined unions are justified in asking the court to grant £1 10s. a week additional to the 438,735 young unmarried men—in some cases to youths of eighteen years of age receiving the adult wage—and to 167,791 married men without children under 14 years of age, while thousands of their fellow unionists are out of employment altogether, and are anxious to get work at any wage that will keep them, and while many are forced to seek relief from benevolent societies and the Ministry. It is clear that the basic wage cannot be increased at the present time, but it must be lowered if, and when, prices fall in the same way, and for the same reason, that it was increased from time to time since 1907. For the reasons mentioned, he proposed to continue the fair and practicable minimum wage, which the court had adopted for so many years, instead of adopting the higher standard fixed by the Commission, which was not practicable at the present time as a flat rate."

Mr. Justice Powers, who was a man of the widest experience, gave full reasons for the decision to which he came. When they found that, notwithstanding the unemployment that existed, the unions were making demands which they knew would, if granted, make for greater unemployment, it was time that the Government gave first consideration to dealing with matters in connection with arbitration.

The bell indicated that the hon. member's time was exhausted.

Mr. GILDAY (*Ithaca*): Hon. members opposite were evidently trying to convince the people that they believed in arbitration, while, at the same time, they were doing everything possible to prevent its progress. The people outside with whom hon. members opposite were allied were up against arbitration, particularly on the broad lines on which it was enforced in Queensland. Queensland workers should be gratified to know that they had an Industrial Arbitration Act framed on broader lines than similar Acts in any other part of the world. That was one of the reasons why hon. members opposite tried to make people outside believe that there was something wrong with arbitration. He remembered an attempt being made to broaden the scope of the Industrial Peace Bill in 1912, so as to give everyone access to the tribunal to be established under that measure. The hon. member for Marce—the present Speaker—moved an amendment with that object. The action of the then Government proved that the people of Queensland would never have got access to an Arbitration Court if hon. members opposite had retained control of the Treasury benches.

The hon. member for Marce on that occasion moved an amendment, the object of which was to bring the whole of the State employees within the scope of the Bill. The hon. member, speaking to his amendment, said, "For the life of me, I cannot understand why they were not included in the Bill." The amendment was defeated by thirty-three votes to twenty-two. Hon. gentlemen who were sitting in opposition to-day who voted against the amendment were—Mr. G. P. Barnes, Mr. Bebbington, Mr. Corser, Mr. Petrie, Mr. Morgan, Mr. T. R. Roberts, Mr. Vowles, and Mr. Walker. The other members who assisted in defeating the amendment had since been rejected by the people at the polls. The hon. member for Townsville had mentioned various grievances published from time to time by public servants, and tried to make the Committee believe that he was an advocate of public servants being brought under the Industrial Arbitration Act. That hon. member was associated with a body of men who had fought the public servants ever since there had been industrial laws in Queensland. He (Mr. Gilday) had taken a very keen interest in industrial matters during the last twenty-six years. One of the first measures passed, which was only a palliative, was the Factories and Shops Act. Later on they had the Wages Boards Act. Neither of those Acts was of any use to the bulk of the workers in Queensland. After the 1912 strike in Brisbane the Industrial Peace Act was brought in. It was one of the worst pieces of legislation, from a workers' point of view, that had ever been enacted in that Chamber. When the present Government obtained control of the Treasury benches, they passed one of the greatest pieces of legislation that had ever been introduced in that Chamber. One of the reasons why, in an underhand way, hon. gentlemen opposite criticised the administration of the Act was because it had given justice to the bulk of the people of Queensland. A good deal had been said about round-table conferences. He had had the pleasure of sitting at such conferences for many years. The class of legislation enacted by previous Governments was not beneficial to the employer or the employee, and that

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was the best method they had of dealing with their affairs. Reputable employers found that unscrupulous individuals used to take advantage of it. The bulk of the employers in Queensland were reasonable men and believed in an Act similar to the present Arbitration Act. The round-table conferences were all right under the circumstances that existed in those days. At the present time they could use the round-table conferences under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act. If there was a dispute in any industry between the employers and employees, the judge first of all ordered them to a round-table conference. If they could not agree on a part or the whole of the matters in dispute, the judge stepped in and dealt with the question on arguments submitted to him. That was one of the very best procedures they could possibly adopt. The Hon. W. M. Hughes, who, in 1917, stated he would not interfere with any of the good work the Labour Administration had done, was one of the greatest destroyers, so far as arbitration was concerned, that they had ever had in Australia. Later on he refused to give a round-table conference to the stewards on the boats. Those were some of the things which hon. gentlemen opposite, who were associated with the Nationalists in the Federal Parliament, were advocating to-day, knowing at the same time that there was no sincerity behind their advocacy. He hoped the Arbitration Act would be amended and made better than it was. He felt sure it would be better for the workers and the employers in the various industries. The officers who were controlling the Arbitration Court were a credit to the court. The Registrar, who had had a good deal of experience in the Labour Department before he had been elevated to his present position, had given every satisfaction. He was able to cope with the many inequalities which came along from time to time from an industrial point of view in a manner which gave satisfaction to both sides. They in Queensland were not in the same position as they were in the Federal sphere, where, if a federated union applied for an award, they had to wait for some years before they could obtain access to the court. That created dissension amongst the workers. To make the court effective and give the employees in any industry satisfaction, access to the court should be made as easy as possible.

Question put and passed.

INSPECTION OF MACHINERY AND SCAFFOLDING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) moved—That £19,133 be granted for "Inspection of Machinery and Scaffolding." This was a decrease on last year.

Mr. PEASE (*Herbert*): In view of the fact that the Opposition continued to decry the State, it was as well to direct attention to the report of the Chief Inspector of Machinery and Scaffolding. He was reminded of a remark made in the Federal Parliament, which was recorded in Federal "Hansard," at page 11,754 of this session. Mr. Lamond said—

"A new arrival to Australia was asked what he thought of the country. He had landed first at Brisbane, and he told them that Brisbane was the queerest place he had ever been in, for every man he met was running down his own country."

[*Mr. Gilday.*

Mr. Gabb interjected—

"He must have read the capitalists' Press."

Many statements had been made by the Opposition, particularly the hon. member for Toowong, in connection with the building trade. Only last Friday night he asked the hon. member would it be correct to say that buildings to the value of £1,000,000 had been erected in Brisbane during the last year. The hon. member replied, "No." The hon. member for Toowong, ever since the session had started, had been pointing out the stagnant state of the building trade. Would that hon. member now repeat that it was not true to say that the value of the new buildings erected in Brisbane last year was £1,000,000?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not know.

Mr. PEASE: The hon. member said he did not know. Yet during the whole of this session he had been pointing out the bad state of Queensland, which, he said, was due to this terrible Government. The hon. member had pinned them down to the building trade, and said, "You have increased the price of timber; you have done some terrible thing; you have ruined the building trade." The official figures showed that 1,681 new buildings had been erected in Brisbane, of the value of £1,358,097. There had been 175 alterations to existing buildings of the value of £106,057. The total, therefore, was 1,856 buildings of the value of £1,464,154. That showed how eager the Opposition were in making incorrect statements solely in order to defame the Government. The Press last Friday pointed out that for structural steel the price had been reduced £4 a ton, and, as a result, the steel works at Newcastle had just put into service a third blast furnace to cope with the output. The article referred to concluded by saying—

"Quite a number of large buildings are projected, and evidently a building programme of considerable proportion is contemplated in Queensland."

That was the position in this terrible State which the Government were said to have ruined. He commended those remarks to the hon. member for Toowong and other Opposition members who were always eager to decry the State by statements which, in this instance, were proved to be absolutely untrue.

Question put and passed.

LABOUR, FACTORIES, AND WORKERS' ACCOMMODATION.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) moved—That £26,332 be granted for "Labour, Factories, and Workers' Accommodation." This was an increase on last year's vote, due chiefly to increased awards and classification increases to various officers of the department.

Question put and passed.

"THE GAS ACT OF 1916."

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*) moved—That £1,815 be granted for "The Gas Act of 1916." This represented an increase of £107 on last year's vote, due to the expectation that there would be further references to the referee under the Act.

Question put and passed.

[8.30 p.m.]

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) moved—That £112,641 be granted for “Railways—General Establishment.” The appropriation last year was £110,831, and the actual expenditure £109,921. There was a nominal increase over last year’s appropriation of £1,800 and over last year’s expenditure of £2,600. As a matter of fact, however, substantial savings had been effected, because automatic increases, basic wages payments, and award increases, which were paid for only a portion of 1920-21, showed an increase of nearly £9,000. There were substantial reductions of approximately £7,000. The number of employees covered by the vote was 304, as compared with 330 last year.

The expenditure in 1920-21 was £5,045,998, whilst for 1921-22 it was estimated at £5,000,770—a reduction of £45,228—but that did not represent all the economy that would be effected, because the basic wage variation, automatic increases, and payments under the 1920 award paid for only portion of last year amounted to an increase of £170,800 for the ensuing year, which brought up the approximate saving to £216,000 on the basis of last year’s expenditure. In the figures for the first three months of the current year they found confirmation of that approximate saving in a saving of £50,000. The economy was substantial, and he was sure would be appreciated by the Committee.

The causes of the increased expenditure for 1920-21 were fairly obvious. The following figures would show the increases in the price of fuel, stores, and material generally as compared with 1914-15—

	Per cent.
Steel plates ...	405
Barbed wire ...	333
Wire rope ...	268
Flat spring steel ...	192
Galvanised plain steel ...	195
Fuel ...	100
Coal ...	100
Rails ...	100 (over)

Those figures illustrated how illogical, fallacious, and unsound were the comparisons made by hon. members opposite between 1914-15 and 1920-21 in order to show that the present Government had not done as well as the Administration of 1914-15. It was most absurd and ludicrous to seek a comparison where no parallel existed. There was as much difference between night and day as there was between 1920-21 and 1914-15, owing to the great war and the results that followed it and affected railway administration as well as every other branch of human activity—commercial, industrial, and otherwise. On page 8 of the Commissioner’s report he showed that the large increase in expenditure was accounted for largely by the following:—

“Increased salaries and wages due to 1920 railway award, £353,051.

“Increased salaries and wages due to award automatic increases, £31,219.

“Increased salaries and wages due to March, 1921, basic wage variation, £44,522.

“Increased cost of coal due to September, 1920, fuel award (approximately), £45,000.”

Hon. members might suggest that the Com-

missioner would seek to buttress a case to support his report, but on page 73 of the Auditor-General’s report they found the following confirmation of his figures:—

“The industrial awards, basic wage, and extra cost of fuel and stores, etc., have been principally responsible for the increased expenditure (£725,106).

“The following comparison serves to illustrate how the expenditure account of fuel has increased during the five years’ period ended 30th June last:—

	1915-16	1920-21.	Increase per cent.
	£	£	
Southern Division	132,395	247,763	87.16
Central Division...	37,889	53,166	40.32
Northern Division	69,311	142,093	105.01
Total ...	£239,595	£443,022	84.92

He now came to revenue:—In 1920-21 the revenue amounted to £5,279,412, or a decrease of £268,868 as compared with the estimate. Hon. members would readily appreciate the causes of that reduction. The industrial and commercial depression that prevailed was a satisfactory explanation, to a large extent. The mining industry was paralysed, the meat export trade was seriously depressed, and generally there were causes which had led to a substantial reduction in production. Unfortunately, for the first three months of the current financial year that depression had continued, and there had been a reduction of £139,000 in their railway revenue as compared with the corresponding period of last year. The position was unsatisfactory, but it was inevitable. What they desired for Queensland was a recovery of markets. An increase in the price of copper of, say, £10 or £12 a ton would not only give employment to thousands of workers, but would also enormously increase railway revenue. A slight increase in the price of meat would similarly enormously increase railway freights. The recovery of markets would take time. After all wars there was depression. Unfortunately, at least 10,000,000 of the best wealth-producers and consumers of the world were swept away, a fact which in itself indicated how railway revenue in Queensland had been affected. There were not so many consumers for their products, there had been a swallowing up of capital and a reduction of the purchasing power of the world, which still continued. Until they could regain that purchasing power the markets would not recover, and Queensland, with other States, would suffer in consequence.

At 8.38 p.m..

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER: New Zealand does not show it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It might not be affected in railway revenue, because New Zealand had considerably increased fares and freights.

Mr. CORSER: None of the Australasian States has increased them as high, proportionately, as Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was an entire mis-statement. He had figures to show that Queensland had increased

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fares and freights during the war less than any other State in Australia. The percentage increases in railway revenue in various States from 1913-14 to 1919-20 were—

New South Wales	...	...	84 per cent.
Victoria	...	...	76 per cent.
New Zealand	...	...	70 per cent.
South Australia	...	...	104 per cent.
Queensland	...	...	44 per cent.

Mr. CORSER: You know that is not of general application. How much did stock freights increase during that period?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The present position indicated in a remarkable manner how dependent they were for their prosperity on external forces. The cry of wealth production was often loud in the land; but what they wanted more immediately were facilities for disposing of their wealth production when they secured it. They wanted some means of transferring it satisfactorily to the other side of the world and disposing of it. Shipping freights were high and the markets were depressed, all of which affected railway revenue.

Mr. BRAND: Is your railway revenue higher than in pre-war years?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No one would deny that, but he had already quoted figures to show that the expenditure had increased in some cases by 405 per cent. The revenue had not increased proportionately for the simple reason that they had not increased fares and freights to the same extent as other States. Let the hon. member for Burnett listen to this quotation from the Commissioner's report, page 20—

"Rates and fares were not increased during the year; with the exception of passengers, wool, cattle, sheep, copper, and coal, there has been only one increase, varying from 5 to 17½ per cent. and averaging approximately 10 per cent., in the past five years, and even then it did not apply to the staple articles of food such as jam, flour, sugar, butter, and potatoes, and a few articles such as galvanised iron and galvanised wire so necessary in the development of a country. Even in 1915 the rates on these commodities were only increased from 5 to 7 per cent., and they comprise a very substantial proportion of the tonnage hauled annually. I am very doubtful if there is any country in the world (with perhaps the exception of China, where, up till some months ago, no increase had been made) which has not increased rates and fares, not once or twice, but several times since the commencement of the great war. The position so far as Queensland is concerned is all the more exceptional when it is considered that, with one exception, this State has the lowest number of inhabitants per mile of line out of twenty-one important railways in different parts of the world regarding which I have been able to obtain statistics, and I know of no other country with a lower passenger traffic and a lower annual tonnage per mile of line. It is readily conceded that a heavy concentrated traffic lends itself to economical working, but whilst this unique position obtains, and our rates and fares are maintained in a position to compare very favourably with those of other countries with a much greater traffic per mile of line, a wider gauge, and roadbeds capable of much greater

loads than ours, it can only be expected that the result will be reflected in the balance-sheet.

Hon. members would see that the policy followed by the Government was to keep down fares and freights to a minimum.

Mr. CORSER: You have increased them three times.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would give the hon. member the comparative increases, and he would find that the increases had been lower than in any other of the Australian States. The first-class fare for 200 miles in New South Wales was 45s. 11d., in Victoria 37s. 9d., on the home railways 58s. 6d., and in Queensland 32s. only.

Mr. BRAND: That is, single fares.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. The basis of comparison was the same in each case. The fare increases were lower in Queensland than any other State during a period of five years. He would give the comparative increases since 1914. The fares and freights on general merchandise had increased as follows—

	Fares.	Freights.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
Queensland	... 17	... 19
New South Wales	... 66	... 52
Victoria	... 48	... 43
Western Australia	... 30	... 29
South Australia	... various	... 44

Those figures showed the tremendous increase in freights and fares that had taken place in other States. If Queensland had followed the policy of the other States, they could have balanced the ledger. That was a very simple matter.

Mr. VOWLES: How did the figures compare before those increases were made?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All he was concerned about was the defence of the Labour Administration.

Mr. VOWLES: They upset the whole of your contention.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They did not. Since the Labour Government had been in power there had been much smaller increases in fares and freights in Queensland than in Tory-governed States. He had proved that, and had given accurate and authentic figures.

Mr. CORSER: You are trying to prove it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had proved it. Surely the hon. member was not going to challenge the Commissioner's figures? The figures had been compiled and verified by officers in the Railway Department. The policy of the Government had been to continue, as far as possible, the fares and freights previously existing, rather than increase them, as other States had done with every increase that had taken place in the working costs. He would quote what had taken place regarding fares and freights in some of the Tory-governed States, because it had an important bearing upon railway administration. Times out of number they found some shallow-brained journalist referring to the fact that there was a railway deficiency in Queensland. That was simply the discovery of a man who put two and two together, and found that it amounted to four. A surplus was not necessarily a virtue, and a deficit was not necessarily a vice. It all depended

upon the circumstances and upon the policy followed. Hon. members opposite had to prove—which they could not do—that there had been unsatisfactory management in the Railway Department. He had figures which he would quote to show that, in comparison with other States, the railway administration in Queensland compared most favourably.

Mr. CORSER: Are you referring to the political side of it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not. He would tell the hon. member for Burnett and his colleagues who were frequently complaining of what they termed political or ministerial interference in the Railway Department, that they were hypocritical in the extreme in that they came to him and asked him to override the Commissioner's decisions.

Mr. CORSER: Never.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member's own party sent him a resolution complaining about the closing down of certain gatehouses which the Commissioner and his officers, in their wisdom and discretion, had decided to close down. What was the use of the hon. member and his colleagues talking about the fact that a plank of their platform was "independent Commissioner control," and railing against what they termed political interference, when they came to him and asked him to exercise that political interference and override the Commissioner's decisions?

Mr. CORSER: I did not go to you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member's party came to him.

Mr. CORSER: That would show there was political influence if you did it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He did not do it.

Mr. CORSER: Are the gatehouses closed?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were. He wrote back to the Country party, and told them that the action was taken by the Commissioner as a result of his investigations, and he was not prepared to override the Commissioner's decisions.

Mr. CORSER: I went to the Commissioner and not to the hon. gentleman, and the gatehouses in my electorate were not closed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That did not bear any relationship to his argument. He was asked to override the Commissioner's decision at the request of the Country party as a party.

Mr. CORSER: It was not a request; it was a protest.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Country party had asked him to override the Commissioner's decisions. It was highly inconsistent and unfair for the Country party to rail against what they termed political or ministerial interference, and at the same time come to him and urge him to override the Commissioner's decisions.

Mr. CORSER: Read the letter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would read it in due course. Why did the hon. member's party send the letter to him?

Mr. CORSER: To protect country interests.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member's party stood for inde-

pendent Commissionership, and because the Commissioner did not do as they desired that party immediately sent along its correspondence to him (Mr. Larcombe).

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: They are doing that every day in the week.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Of course they are. He wished to show the insincerity of hon. members opposite in asking him to interfere in the way they had done, and at the same time, if he carried out some decision in some other case, they objected to it.

Dealing with the question of freights and fares, he would quote from the "Sydney Bulletin" of December, 1913, when the Tory Administration was in power in New South Wales. That paper stated—

"The New South Wales railways being again in a low-spirited condition—in fact, having never got out of that condition—it is proposed to increase the rates by 10 per cent. This, added to the increase last year, makes 21 per cent., and there were also increases in 1913, 1914, and 1916."

The "Daily Mail" of 9th September, 1921, had the following paragraph:—

"TERRITORY RAILWAYS.

"INCREASED CHARGES.

"Darwin, Monday.—The Northern Territory railways announce the following increases:—Passenger fares, 10 per cent.; parcels and goods, 25 per cent.; wharf and tonnage, 40 per cent.; haulage from the jetty to sorting sheds, 50 per cent.; sorting shed floorage, 50 per cent."

Take South Australia, under Tory Administration. An article in the "Daily Mail" of 28th January, 1921, stated:—

"The Railway Commissioner intimates that from 1st February railway freights and fares will be increased by 16½ per cent."

In Victoria, where there was a so-called sympathetic administration for the farmers, they had increases in freights amounting in the case of agricultural produce and butter to 13 per cent. Was it not better to have a slight deficiency in Queensland?

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: A slight deficiency?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would show, by comparison, that it was a slight deficiency.

Mr. FLETCHER: Do you think that the railways can stand an annual loss of £1,700,000?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would prove that the deficit, by comparison, was slight. He would read an extract from the "Trade Journal" of 1920—

"REPORTS FOLLOWING RAILWAY FREIGHTS INCREASES.

	Per cent.
" (a) Canada	40
(b) United States of America	50
(c) Belgium	100
(d) Italy	120
(e) France	140 "

Mr. CORSER: Read Russia!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had made the comparison complete, and would now return to affairs in Queensland.

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He wanted to indicate what the Tory Administration did when things were bad in Queensland in 1902—

“On 1st July, 1902, the goods rates were increased as under—

‘M’ class by 5 per cent.

‘A’ class by 7½ per cent.

‘B’ class, 1st class, 2nd class, and 3rd class, by 10 per cent.

Pigs by 20 per cent.

Other livestock by 10 per cent.”

That was an Administration which was supposed to be sympathetic to the man on the land. In 1902 the single fares on the Mackay, Bowen, Cooktown, and Normanton railways were increased by 50 per cent., and the return fares by one and a-half times the single fares. They saw how wonderfully favourable was the policy of Labour Administration with regard to fares and freights as compared with the policy of Tory Administrations in Queensland. The policy of hon. members opposite was to increase freights and fares.

Mr. CORSER: Who told the hon. gentleman that?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. members of the Opposition, whom he would now quote—

[9 p.m.]

The hon. member for Albert, when speaking in 1918, said—

“Speaking as a country member, he would have no objection to an increase of freights, provided every member of the community was treated in the same way.”

That was a declaration of policy on the part of the Country party. He would show what the policy of the Nationalist party was by quoting what their leader said on this question last year—

“He did not see why there should not be an increase in fares and freights when conditions existed such as were obtaining to-day. They had had to do it in the past. The other States were doing it now. Distasteful as it might be for the Minister and the department and the Government to go in for increased fares and freights, yet, so far as one was able to judge from the position as it existed to-day, there appeared to be no other remedy for the position.”

Those declarations showed that the Country party and the Nationalist party stood for increased fares and freights.

Mr. CORSER: You have done it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member came into the House as a representative of the Country party, and how could he justify the policy of increasing fares and freights to balance the ledger in Queensland? Was he going to exact from the farmer a ruinous increase in fares and freights to balance the railway ledger? Hon. members opposite had done it, and said that the Government should do it. Those hon. members claimed to be the friends of the men on the land, so that it was just as well that the men on the land should understand the policy of the Country party.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would appeal to hon. members on my left to give the Min-

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ister an opportunity of making his statement. They will realise the importance of the matter under discussion. I understood from the leader of the Opposition last night that the Opposition were very anxious to get the information now being given by the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: To show that the policy of raising fares and freights was not confined to the hon. member for Albert, or the hon. member for Windsor, he would quote what the hon. member for Warwick said—

“He was afraid they were shirking to a large extent the real point which ought to receive first consideration from the Committee. He contended that the railways should be made to pay. He believed that the only proper way to achieving the end the Commissioner and the Government should have in view was by an all-round increase in fares and freights.”

If the people of Queensland were satisfied to make up the railway deficiency in that way, that was their responsibility; but he misjudged the sentiment of the people if they were prepared to change this Government with their present railway policy for one willing to pile up the agony in the shape of increased fares and freights.

The matter of employees and train mileage had been suggested as a standard of comparison to ascertain whether the Railway Department under the Labour Administration had been well or ill governed. He would quote figures for the period before Labour came into office, and during Labour's control, to show what had taken place in the matter of employees. After he had dealt with that matter on a previous occasion, the hon. member for Enoggera questioned the accuracy of his figures. He submitted his figures with the remarks of the hon. member to an officer in the department, who minuted the papers as follows—

“Figures quoted by the Minister are quite correct.”

Mr. KERR: So far as they went, I said.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member did not perhaps understand that, in the first place, the comparisons were compiled for some years in a very unsatisfactory way.

Mr. KERR: That is right. These are the figures I quoted.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: These figures were taken from the paysheets and certified to by the chief accountant as being correct.

Mr. KERR: You accused me unjustly there. I said you were correct as far as you went. My figures were also correct.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was only quoting a portion of the employees. He (Mr. Larcombe) was quoting the whole of the employees, which was a fair comparison.

Mr. KERR: I was quite honest about the whole show; you are not. I quoted the whole of the figures, and you did not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He thought it was necessary to deal with these points, because there was no doubt that hon. members opposite would follow the policy they had invariably followed before—they would deal in vague generalities, and not

come down to concrete facts and stick to the figures given by the Commissioner and his officers. The comparison with regard to employees was as follows:—

In 1920 there were	...	...	16,283
In 1921 there were	...	...	15,899

Decrease as compared with previous years	...	...	924
Take the record of the Tory Administration—			
In 1912 there were	...	...	12,900
In 1914-15 there were	...	...	14,936

Increase 2,036

Under Tory administration employees increased by 983, and train miles decreased by 117,750.

Mr. MOORE: Are construction workers included in those figures?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, not construction workers, but temporary as well as permanent workers—

1914-15	...	...	14,936
1920-21	...	...	15,899

Increase 963

The increase of employees in the three years under the Tory Administration was 2,036, and under Labour Government 963, or a difference of 1,073 in favour of Labour Administration. Hon. members opposite had the audacity to assert that the Railway Department was overmanned. The figures he had given showed the true position. Did those figures prove bad management?

Mr. CORSER: The figures are drawn up to suit you.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was an astounding revelation to find that the party which talked about overstaffing and bad management were responsible for flooding the service to the enormous extent he had mentioned in three years. The comparison with regard to employees and train miles was—

Employees—			
1912-13	...	...	13,982
1913-14	...	...	14,965
Increase	...	...	983

Train miles—			
1912-13	...	...	11,464,081
1913-14	...	...	11,346,334
Decrease	...	...	117,750

He would give the following comparison in connection with Labour Administration last year:—

Employees—			
1920	...	...	16,823
1921	...	...	15,399
Decrease	...	...	924

Train miles—			
1920	...	...	10,443,619
1921	...	...	10,735,723
Increase	...	...	292,104

Employees had decreased by 954 under Labour administration and train miles had increased by 292,104. Those figures were astounding. (Opposition laughter.) Hon members opposite were astonished at them.

Mr. MOORE: We are.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had given every comparison that hon. members opposite asked for.

Mr. MOORE: Not yet. I want the decrease in train miles from 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had given the result of the Tory Administration as against the results achieved under the Labour Administration. The figures he had given showed that the Government stood for efficiency and sound methods.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS interjecting,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I have already appealed to hon. members on my left to give the Minister an opportunity of stating his case. They emphasised the fact that they were anxious to get information, and I hope they will show their anxiety by not interjecting while the Minister is speaking. The Premier has stated that hon. members will have an opportunity of dealing with the Minister's statement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would give hon. members another quotation, which they might follow closely to see if there was any weakness in regard to the comparison—

“Employees per mile of railway in 1914, 3.17; employees per mile of railway in 1921, 2.76.”

Where was the proof of over-staffing?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Where did the increase in train miles take place?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Was the hon. gentleman going to challenge the figures of the Commissioner? It did not matter where the increase took place. The figures he had given, he was certain, were astounding to the Opposition.

Mr. VOWLES: They are. (Opposition laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He asked the Opposition to consider them seriously before they again recklessly criticised railway administration. Hon. gentlemen were endeavouring to be facetious and to discountenance the value of the figures, but they could not detract one iota from the force of the comparisons.

Mr. FLETCHER: What was the deficit for the year?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would deal with the deficit. Ever since he had entered Parliament in 1912, he had contended that in a young country like Queensland freights and fares should be kept down to a reasonable margin. There was nothing new about that—it was a truism. Still, as the Secretary for Railways, he had an opportunity of helping to preserve that policy.

Mr. KERR: The earnings on the Queensland railways per head are greater than they are in any State in Australia. That shows that your fares and freights are higher.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were not. The hon. member would find that the Queensland fares and freights had not increased proportionately anything like they had in other States. Before he became Minister of the Crown he had contended that the railways should be considered in a similar relationship to the community as education; that was, that as far as possible they should regard the railways as a public

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utility rather than as a profit-making concern. They were expending "considerably over £1,000,000 a year on education. There was no profit in that, in a money-making sense; they did not obtain any direct return. Hon. members might as honestly and logically designate that expenditure a deficiency.

Mr. FLETCHER: It is totally different.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no difference; there was a sound logical relationship. The results from education were indirect. Boys and girls were being turned out in thousands every year able to battle successfully not only for themselves but for the country. The State realised that an educated community was most likely to succeed in competition with other communities which were not so well educated. That was why the people of Queensland and of other States voluntarily took upon themselves the task of providing free education. Arguing by analogy, the great land monopolist and income tax payers in Queensland ought to be prepared to pay a fair share towards helping to develop the great unpeopled portions of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the railway policy of the Queensland Government. They said that the deficiency on the railway service should be made up by the great land monopolists—by those who owned valuable property in Queen street and by those who were responsible for large income tax payments. By making up the deficiency from the consolidated revenue, the burden was thus being shared by those people.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The people in the country pay it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not proportionately. If they increased freights and fares, the man in the country would pay enormously more than he was paying under their present system. The great Queen-street landowners and the wealthy companies were making up the deficiency on the railways, which would be made up by the primary producer and the small industrial worker if they adopted the policy of increasing fares and freights sufficiently to balance the ledger. He was surprised at any member of the Country party suggesting the increasing of fares and freights sufficiently to balance the ledger.

Mr. VOWLES: Who asked for it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was the logic of the interjections and arguments of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Albert had asked for it.

Mr. CORSER: No, he had not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The leader of the Nationalist party and the hon. member for Warwick had asked for it. Not only were land settlement and agricultural production involved, but mining development also was affected. The whole of the industries of the State, as well as the producer and industrial worker, were benefited by the present policy. To unduly increase fares and freights in order to balance the ledger would be disastrous to country interests. Some increase might be made in order to reduce the deficit, but the whole deficiency could not be made up without a crushing burden of taxation being placed on the primary producer. As an ideal he certainly

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believed that their railways should be as free as their roads and education. The financial exigencies of the situation prevented that at the present time. They were not able to saddle the consolidated revenue with the whole of the cost. He believed it would be a sound policy to have free railways, and he hoped to live long enough to see that policy adopted. At one time it was considered just as absurd and ridiculous to advocate free roads as it now was to advocate free railways. It was not long since they had tollbars in Queensland. Men at that time claimed that roads should not be free and education should not be free. When their financial condition was such as to justify the change, he hoped it would be accepted. Speaking of free education reminded him that Herbert Spencer, the great individualistic philosopher, the tin god of hon. members opposite, built up a marvellous fabric of logical argument to show the disastrous result which would accrue from free education. Notwithstanding the marvellous genius and education of Spencer, his arguments had been falsified by actual results. He believed that, if they had free railways, those who sneered, jeered, and ridiculed such a suggestion to-day would have their arguments falsified by experience.

Mr. BRAND: You believe in taxing the people to the tune of £5,000,000 to provide free railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He believed in readjusting the burden more equitably. Hon. members had the audacity to talk about the railway deficiency. What right have they to talk about it? Did they not hand over to the present Administration an accumulated deficit of £3,500,000? Yet they had the effrontery to talk about the railway deficiency!

Mr. CORSER: We did not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman was telling an untruth.

Mr. CORSER: I am not. You are trying to twist the facts to suit yourself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The accumulated deficiency when the Labour Administration took over was £3,500,000.

Mr. VOWLES: You said we were responsible.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Tory Administrations of Queensland were responsible. Hon. members opposite talked of the accumulated Labour deficit. The same Labour members were not there now, but it was the same party. So it was the same party on the other side. The leader of the Opposition had been a member of the House much longer than he had. The hon. gentleman was a member of the party which for many years showed railway deficiencies. The present Government deficiency had been built up during a period unparalleled in the history of Queensland and of the world. Never previously in the history of mankind had such a war, in the magnitude of its consequences, been fought. Hon. members opposite had built up most of their deficiencies in the good times, when wages were low, material was cheap, when there were favourable seasons, and when there was no war to contend against.

Mr. CORSER: They built up surpluses, too, and you do not deduct them from the deficiency.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was giving the hon. member the actual

figures. He would give him further figures if he would receive them—

	Deficit. Over Five-year Period.
	£
Victoria	2,031,000
Western Australia	1,370,000
South Australia	1,045,000
South Africa (accumulated)	3,000,000
	For One Year.
England (1919)	41,000,000
U.S. America (1920)	45,000,000
France (1920)	42,000,000

Last year the deficiency was only 33.45 per cent of the expenditure.

Mr. CORSER: Read the surpluses and put them against that £8,500,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had given hon. members a fair comparison.

Mr. CORSER: You have given the years of losses and will not deduct them from the years of gain.

Mr. FLETCHER: By a fair comparison, your losses would total £80,000,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For years past hon. members had hurled charges at the railway administration. Very seldom had he risen to reply, and he desired to get these figures into "Hansard" by way of reply to the charges which had been made. The quotation of these figures was all that was necessary to dissipate effectively the misapprehension which the speeches of hon. members opposite created. As far as possible, he was sticking to facts culled from various reports, and was not giving his own opinion. He would give some more facts relating to railway deficits in other States and countries where their Tory friends were in power—

Year.	Railway Deficiency.	Percentage of Deficit to Expenditure.
	£	
1890-1901 ..	630,301	59.58
1901-1902 ..	513,128	51.69
1912-1903 ...	477,454	45.30
1903-1904 ...	387,997	47.79
1904-1905 ...	281,898	34.60

[9.30 p.m.]

Mr. VOWLES: Is there a Tory Government in America?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Absolutely. But, notwithstanding that the financiers also were Tories, they had such faith in the credit of the Queensland Government that they advanced them 12,000,000 dollars. That was a most wonderful vindication of Labour policy, from New York, the most exacting centre in the world, which gobbled up, as the "Courier" said, their 12,000,000-dollar loan in half an hour.

He wanted to give a few newspaper extracts to indicate the conditions of railways in other countries. In an issue of the "Courier" of August, 1921, they found a heading dealing with South African railways as "Profoundly Unsatisfactory." And in the issue of the "Daily Telegraph" of September, 1921, there was the following:—

"The Indian Railways Committee's report states that the existing railways

are entirely inadequate to meet the needs of the country, and that the Government does not provide adequate funds. Thus the system is paralysed. Bribery in connection with wagon allotments has grown into a system of organised blackmail."

The "Courier" announced that the Canadian railways were practically bankrupt, but the "Montreal Star" of 8th August, 1921, contained the report of a speech by Mr. R. Lanctot, who, *inter alia*, said—

"The railways of Canada, said Mr. Lanctot, represented 1,200,000,000 dollars of the public money, and it meant a deficit of 70,000,000 and an additional 165,000,000 dollars for upkeep, which had been voted last year. What was the use of adding to an investment which produced nothing but deficits?"

That was in a Tory-governed country. He was endeavouring to show that where there were Tory administrations there were not only railway deficiencies but also that they were enormous in extent. If the argument of hon. members were sound, they would find that there were deficiencies only in States where Labour administrations existed, but it was a world-wide complaint.

Mr. FLETCHER: Does not the Commissioner say that those comparisons are often very erroneous?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Where was the relation between the interjection and his quotation? Now he wanted to indicate what the "Railway Age," a New York paper, said concerning the United States railways—

"The fact cannot be too strongly emphasised that from the standpoint of its earnings and expenses, the railroad system is, to-day, absolutely bankrupt."

That was proof that railway deficits were general, that they existed where there was no Labour administration, but where there opponents held absolute sway. They knew that, if they had control in Queensland, they could only avoid deficits by imposing a crushing burden of fares and freights on the primary producers. They knew that the criticism of hon. members opposite was largely gallery play and political fireworks, based upon a desire to discredit the Government in relation to railway control and administration generally. There had been a remarkable change in the feelings of the electors during the last week. If the Government party had spent £20,000 on propaganda, they could not have obtained a greater result than the American loan produced. It was the greatest vindication of policy that a Labour Administration had ever had.

Mr. FRY: Put it to the test.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was just twelve months and four days since they had put it to the test, and they were returned. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: When they were beaten on the Council abolition question by 60,000 votes, they put it to the test and they came back. After the Federal elections hon. members said, "Put it to the test," and they won again. They had a record that no other Government in Australia had—(Opposition cheers and laughter)—a record, he repeated, that no

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other Government in the British Empire had—(uproar)—because, during the currency of the war and its immediate aftermath they had been returned on three successive occasions. (Government cheers.) Could hon. members point to another place where that had happened? The Government of New South Wales fell, Governments throughout the world had fallen, but they had gone on all the time and there was no doubt about the result of the next appeal to the electors. (Renewed interruption.) Hon. members had only one chance, and they lost it. The American loan had changed the whole complexion of the political situation.

Mr. FERRICKS: And now they are all coming cap in hand asking for some of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Here were some further increases in the railway expenditure:—

" SALARIES AND WAGES BILL.—				£
1914-15	...	...	...	1,743,000
1920-21	...	...	...	3,782,000
Increase				£2,039,000

" REDUCTION OF HOURS.—		Per cent
Clerks and telegraphists	...	23½
Stationmasters, night officers, and relief officers	...	20
Ipswich Workshops, fitters, carpenters, and all tradesmen	...	8½

" OVERTIME PAYMENT.—After eight hours."

There were several large items on which he would not enter into detail. Hon. members had frequently asserted that the Government had placed railway employees beyond their control by putting them under an Arbitration Court, which had given them substantial increases, and that they were suffering for it. Under the Tory Administration the railway workers were starved. The present Government were compelled to give them something like a living wage when they came into power; and yet they had members like the hon. member for Oxley talking about abolishing their industrial machinery. Hon. members opposite passed the Industrial Coercion Act, while the present Government repealed that Act and passed the Industrial Arbitration Act, giving to the railway workers of Queensland the right of industrial citizenship.

Mr. CORSER: And now you admit you made a mistake.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. Did hon. members realise that, when they advocated the abolition of that industrial machinery, they advocated industrial anarchy?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Rubbish!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was a good judge of rubbish, particularly Darra rubbish and co-operative fruit rubbish. The hon. member had developed an irritable, irascible, objectionable method when he spoke or interjected. (Interruption.) He would like to know by what right the hon. member presumed dogmatically to impose his views on the Committee. What record had he as a business man to justify him in dictating to the Railway Minister or Commissioner what policy they should pursue?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: An absolute failure.

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The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let the hon. member take a lesson from the leader of the Country party and the Nationalist party, and acquire some of their modesty and restraint.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Like you have got.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Let him not presume to usurp the functions of the leader of the Opposition or the Nationalist party. There was no need for any hon. member to drag the question of railway administration down to personalities. The hon. member for Oxley had done it, but he hoped that he would be the last. Let hon. members opposite who advocated the abolition of industrial arbitration remember that they were advocating industrial anarchy.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Rubbish!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And he repeated that the hon. member was a good judge of Darra and co-operative fruit rubbish.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: It is rubbish all the same.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members opposite did not realise the significance of their advocacy of the abolition of the court. What would result? Strikes and lockouts. They would have the farmers' produce rotting and the whole trade of the State dislocated. They would get to the position that occurred in England and other countries, where there were not only strikes and lockouts, but their attendant violence and lawlessness. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order! I have already pointed out that every member has twenty-five minutes if he desires to take advantage of it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not claiming that the Industrial Arbitration Act had brought about an industrial paradise. No industrial legislation could abolish industrial unrest absolutely, but sane, rational legislation could reduce to a minimum industrial unrest, and that was what they had done in Queensland. Knibbs's latest statistics gave the following striking figures of working days and wages lost in the fourth quarter of 1920 in the various States:—

	Total Number of Working Days lost	Total Estimated Losses in Wages.
		£
New South Wales	375,659	276,605
Victoria	107,765	79,976
Queensland	21,410	13,971
South Australia	53,775	81,717
Western Australia	28,430	20,289

In regard to the number of working days and wages lost, Queensland stood better than any other State in Australia. He had not quoted Tasmania, because it was hardly large enough for the purposes of comparison. They had that eloquent tribute paid to Queensland industrial legislation in the facts and figures set out in Knibbs's Commonwealth statistics. They found that the working days lost were enormously more in Tory States than in Queensland, and the loss in wages was enormously greater in other States

as compared with Queensland. In his brief introduction, what he had stated in regard to railway administration would serve to dissipate some of the misapprehensions previously existing.

The Government regretted the necessary curtailment in the railway staff, which was rendered necessary largely by the reduction in revenue. No hon. member would contend that a reduction of £130,000 in revenue in three months did not necessarily necessitate some adjustment to the railway staff, and, as far as possible, they had made it as light as they were able, and where there was a probability of the work becoming normal they had pooled the work and the men were generously accepting in many cases a loss of a day a fortnight in order that their comrades might be continued in employment. Notwithstanding what had been said by their opponents about the harshness of that policy, what was the policy of their opponents in dealing with a similar matter some years ago? In the year 1914-1915, which was a normal year before the Labour party came into power, the Tory Administration decided not to pay the railwaymen their automatic increases.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How could it be normal? War had been declared. Why won't you be truthful? You are not truthful.

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

The TREASURER: I rise to a point of order. I do not think that hon. members opposite should be allowed, on every conceivable opportunity, to insult hon. members on this side of the Chamber. The hon. member for Drayton said, "You are not truthful," and that is distinctly unparliamentary.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member for Drayton distinctly said that the Minister's statement was untruthful. Hon. members are not privileged to use offensive remarks, and I therefore suggest that the hon. member should withdraw it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I withdraw; but it was an incorrect statement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The year 1914-15 was not an abnormal year, because the effects of the great war had not been felt. They were reflected in succeeding years. When the Cabinet decided to withhold those automatic increases there was no war. It was before war was declared. In 1902 and 1904 their opponents passed special retrenchment Acts to reduce salaries. In 1902 the salaries were reduced in the following way:—

Salaries.	1902 Act. Per cent.	1904 Act. Per cent.
£451 and over ...	15	7½
£301 to £450 ...	12½	6½
£151 to £300 ...	10	5
£101 to £150 ...	7	3¾

In addition to that a poll tax on all salaries over £101 was levied, in addition to sacking hundreds of men.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I rise to a point of order. The Minister is making a misstatement. He said that the automatic increases were withheld before war was declared. I was at the meeting of the party after war was declared when that was decided upon.

The TREASURER: They were withheld from the 1st July.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: After war was declared.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What month and what year was war declared? That decision was arrived at before war was declared.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No; I was at the meeting.

The TREASURER: Was the hon. member at the Cabinet meeting?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It was not a Cabinet meeting; it was a caucus meeting.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were told that it was only the Labour party that had a caucus, but the hon. member for Drayton now informed the Committee that his party had a caucus, too. He would like briefly to intimate the position in regard to unemployment in other countries. The "Daily Mail" of 5th September, 1921, stated—

"Revolutionary administration and lawless demands of the unemployed in London indicate the gravity of England's economic position."

The "Daily Telegraph" of 10th August, had the following headings—

"Serious Trouble at Dundee."
"Police use Batons Freely."

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not think the Minister is quite in order in dealing with the question of unemployment, except in so far as he is able to link it up with the railway administration. The hon. gentleman will not be in order in discussing the general question of unemployment.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He admitted that; but, according to the criticism of hon. members opposite, the curtailment in the railway service was something peculiar to a Labour Government, and he was endeavouring to show that a curtailment in the staff was taking place in other countries, not only so far as State activities were concerned, but so far as private activities were concerned. A lot of the trouble in Queensland was really due to the wholesale sacking of men by private employers. In the United States there were, approximately, 5,000,000, and in England, approximately, 3,650,000 unemployed, and in other countries a similar proportion in relation to the population. That should prove that the unemployment existing in Queensland was not peculiar to this State.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman was going to fix all those things up.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Curtailment in the railway service had taken place in the United States of America, New Zealand, and all other countries to a greater extent than in Queensland. The Railway Department had gone in for a policy of economy, and had shown a saving of approximately £216,000 on the expenditure of last year. Taking into consideration the facts he had mentioned, hon. members would see that there would be a big reduction in revenue at least for the first six months of the financial year, and probably for the whole twelve months, brought about by circumstances over which the Government had no control. He had shown that in other States where their

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opponents were in power, deficiencies existed to a greater extent. The Labour Government did not enforce an increase in freights and fares during the currency of the last financial year. And that showed that the present railway control was sound and satisfactory.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): In the limited time at his disposal he proposed to reply to some of the matters referred to by the Minister. It would be impossible for one, without perusing the figures, to criticise them. The hon. gentleman had said the figures were only relative. It brought back to his mind the saying of Josh Billings, "Figures never lie, but liars often figured." The Premier had put into "Hansard" a comparative table of freights, but he forgot to tell hon. members that he quoted port rates of Queensland and the general rates of other States, and when they analysed the figures given by the Minister they would find the same thing obtained. The Minister did not give the starting point of the figures. What was the good of giving the ratio of increase without giving them the starting point, so as to enable them to find the finishing point? He challenged the hon. gentleman to produce the figures. They had been told that it was the policy of the Government not to make the railways pay, and that the previous Government had accumulated deficits of £3,000,000—he presumed over a period from the time of separation until the present Government took office. The Minister did not set off against that figure the accumulated surpluses gained during that time. If he looked at page 72 of the Auditor-General's report, he would find that the whole history of Labour Governments in Queensland had been one of deficits. In the year 1914-15 the Tory Government, as they hear so much about, were able to show a surplus of £48,651.

At 10 p.m.,

Mr. F. A. COOPER, one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the CHAIRMAN in the chair.

Mr. VOWLES: In the very first year of Labour administration they put up a deficit of a little over £500,000, the next year, £737,000, and next year £1,000,000, the year after that £1,250,000, the next year £1,229,000, and last year a record deficit of £1,739,000. The accumulated deficits amounted to £6,660,000. The Government told them that they did not intend their railways to pay, but, if the Government intended to carry out the policy advocated at a Labour Conference which was now sitting in Brisbane, the community would have to find the cost of running them and also the interest on the capital involved. He would analyse the earnings. They were told by the Government that it was unfair to compare any particular year of their Administration with a pre-war year. Last year there was an increase of £319,000 in railway revenue as compared with the previous year. What was the proportion of earnings in 1914 as compared with 1916?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have not increased our fares and freights.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman showed the number of employees in the service in previous years. The whole of that comparison was in favour of previous Governments, which were able to employ more men and get better results out of them. The Commis-

sioner's report showed that the earnings in the year ended 30th June last was £17.72 per man. In 1914, when there were more men employed, they earned an average of £102.0 per man.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: But the fares and freights were proportionately higher.

Mr. VOWLES: What was the good of talking like that? Had there not been increases in fares and freights since 1914?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And 100 per cent. increase in materials.

Mr. VOWLES: He admitted that there had been a marked increase in the cost of material. The Auditor-General, on page 73 of his report, said—

"The industrial awards, basic wage, and extra cost of fuel and stores, etc., have been principally responsible for the increased expenditure (£725,106.)"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is a commendation of our policy.

Mr. VOWLES: There is still £1,000,000 of your deficit unaccounted for.

At 10.7 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. VOWLES: The Minister had had an increased revenue, but his deficits were increasing.

The hon. gentleman had referred to political influence being used by members of the Country party to try and interfere with the Commissioner. What was done was done openly, in a letter to the hon. gentleman himself. It was brought before the notice of the Country party that something was being done which was against the policy of the party—that certain gatekeepers who did other work besides looking after the gates, such as selling stamps and issuing tickets, were being retrenched. Those women received the handsome remuneration of about 15s. a week. They asked the hon. gentleman to reconsider the matter, and to retain those persons in their positions, if possible. Had they gone to the Commissioner instead of the Minister they would have been charged with discourtesy.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, you would not.

Mr. VOWLES: Mr. Davidson, he knew, would not discuss any matter with him at all, but would tell him to go to the Minister. He thought the reason was that the Commissioner had instructions that he must not discuss matters with members of Parliament.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is entirely incorrect.

Mr. VOWLES: That position had existed when the present Treasurer was Secretary for Railways. They were accused in the House of going to the Commissioner behind the Minister's back, and were told that the proper thing was to go to the Minister. To say that they were trying to undermine the department, or were acting contrary to what they had advocated in the past in the House was not correct. It was the policy of the Country party to go to the head of the department in any matter they wanted to have put right.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We do not complain about that, but your own supporters complained about what they termed political interference. They are inconsistent; they came to me themselves.

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Mr. VOWLES: The capital invested in the railways was £47,365,000, having been increased from £45,676,000 to that amount at the end of the last financial year. That involved an additional interest burden of £104,000 a year.

He would like to draw attention to the balance-sheet which appeared on page 72 of the Auditor-General's report, in which they were shown how the deficit of £1,739,000 was arrived at. There were two interest items—one, the interest on the capital involved in reproductive work—although it did not produce its own interest; and the other, the interest on the money expended on rolling-stock under construction and unopened lines, £158,000. His complaint was in regard to the huge amount of money lying dead in connection with railway lines under construction and producing no income. Apparently, it was the policy of the Government to allow that work to lie dead, and lose interest on the capital for all time. Previous to the last election there was a sum of £27,000 spent at Toowoomba—for what purpose he did not know. They were told that the Government were going to build railway sheds there. It was a good election cry to get the hon. member for Toowoomba back again. That work was going to wreck and ruin; it was being washed away by the rains. There were very expensive tents in the portion which had been levelled, which were charged up to loan account, and which were practically abandoned. All classes of plant—shovels, picks, and barrows—were lying out there at the mercy of the weather, or for anybody to take away.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The delegation did that.

Mr. VOWLES: The delegation were now responsible, according to the Minister, for this material being left out in the open to depreciate or to be stolen. How could he reconcile one with the other? If it were the intention of the Government to bring about the socialisation of the railways in the direction in which Labour circles were now moving to adopt as their policy for the future—to which hon. gentlemen would have to subscribe whether they wished it or not—the sooner the public knew it the better. They could not go on accumulating deficits year after year. It was reaching the breaking point. Was it fair that the primary producers should have to find income taxation, pay land taxation in many cases, and have imposed upon them increased freights and fares, and at the same time suffer the inconvenience they had to suffer because of depleted rolling-stock and decreased services? It was not so bad now, but a little while ago they did not receive ordinary civility from the railway employees. The Government were running provision stores in connection with the Construction Branch. Last year the loss on the transaction was £746, and the accumulated loss to 30th June, 1921, amounted to £3,165. Would it not be better to close them up? What right had they to have experimental stores? What right had people to be getting from the Government goods for which they did not pay? At the store connected with the Enoggera-Terror's Creek line there had been a loss of £928. The same thing applied to the Mackay-Proserpine line, the Malbon-Sulicman Creek line, the Blackall-Windorah line, and the Merinda-Bowen line—where the loss had been £1,758. Those bad debts should not have been incurred. They knew very

well that in the Bowen district, where those stores were situated, a huge amount of money had been doled out in relief. At pages 75 and 76 of his report the Auditor-General said—

“It has been the practice to have a general stocktaking of all stores and material throughout the State carried out by the railway audit staff every two years. Under ordinary circumstances this stocktaking became due at the close of March last, but, in view of the favourable nature of the last reports of my inspector, who examined the accounts of the four principal stores, and also the present great need for economy, it was decided to allow the same to stand over for at least another year.”

That matter was open to suspicion. His opinion was that the stores had been depleted, and where they had had thousands of pounds in the past in assets they did not have them now. It should be the practice every year to have a report of all the assets in connection with those departments.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Is not that the Auditor-General's work?

Mr. VOWLES: The Auditor-General was responsible to Parliament. He was not giving them the criticisms he should give in connection with many matters. There had been a very marked difference in the attitude of the Auditor-General during the last few years.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You want to make him a political partisan.

Mr. VOWLES: He would not present him with a gold-mounted walking stick. Who was responsible for that?

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A mean thing to say.

Mr. VOWLES: What right had a Minister to present an officer like that with a valuable present?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you say I did?

Mr. VOWLES: He did not say the hon. gentleman did. He understood it was the Treasurer. It was indecent for that sort of thing to happen. Then there was a criticism of himself and the hon. member for Oxley in the first page of the report. He knew that that was going in the report a week before the report was issued. He heard it in the street, and was also told that it was inspired by the Premier.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is very unfair to say that.

Mr. VOWLES: He was not the only one who had heard it.

THE TREASURER: Why did you not come to me to find out the facts?

Mr. VOWLES: Would the hon. gentleman give him (Mr. Vowles) a gold walking stick to keep quiet? He did not want one. A huge sum of money was being expended in the Railway Department in overtime. There should not be that expenditure. One man was getting more than he was legitimately entitled to, and another was kept out of a job.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You cannot avoid it in connection with the running staff.

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Mr. VOWLES: In many cases it could be avoided if they had a better supervision of some of the trains and men had to give a legitimate excuse before they were entitled to overtime. In the past a man would be penalised for being late with his train. Now he was being rewarded, because he received double pay. That should not be.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): This was the most important vote, because it indicated the most disastrous results. In spite of the brave attempt of the Secretary for Railways, it had to be admitted that this was a most mis-managed department. The Minister had been ill-advised in referring to the Darra cement works. If the Railway Department had been managed a quarter as well as that company, it would not be in the position it was in to-day. The Darra Cement Company was a paying proposition, and everyone was pointing to it as one of the coming industries of Queensland. To sidetrack attention from the disastrous dry rot in the Railway Department, the Minister referred to that industry. They all knew the amount of the deficit on the railways, and they wanted to find some way of improving the position. It was not caused because Queensland had gone back. It was not because they had not a reasonably businesslike Commissioner. It was because the gentlemen opposite were driven by extremists. Other Governments succeeded because they would not be driven. No services had been curtailed in the city, but the primary producer had been hit every time. He had been to the Commissioner that day to try and have reinstated a train which had been taken off. In the West some lines were becoming rusty which, under the previous Administration, were payable propositions. When the last Government went out of office the rolling-stock, lines, and buildings were in good order. As far north as they liked to go to-day they would find the buildings in a dilapidated condition. Why had the first class carriages half the screws out? Because the Government were a screw loose and did not face things in a businesslike spirit. At present it was almost impossible to live off the main line. Nothing had ever been done unless the people were provided with means of communication. If the Government were their own masters they would alter the present conditions, which were making the lot of the primary producers much worse, and eventually would affect the workers. The Government's bad business methods had resulted in men being deflated.

At 10.30 p.m.,

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

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

CITY OF SOUTH BRISBANE LOAN ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): On an earlier stage I really made a second reading speech on this Bill. The South Brisbane City Council had authority under the Act of 1897 to borrow certain moneys. They have borrowed or raised by debentures £105,000, which has to

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be renewed very shortly, and this is merely an enabling Bill to give them authority to renew the debentures or borrow on suitable debentures sufficient money to liquidate the existing debentures. We, then, intend to bring them into the same category in regard to borrowing matters as other local authorities. They find it more convenient, and so do we. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 5, both inclusive, put and passed.

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

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

GOVERNMENT INSCRIBED STOCK ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The TREASURER: This Bill is really in the same category as the last one; and my second reading speech was really made on the introductory stage. It was introduced for the purpose of giving greater facilities to minors and widows in respect of the transfer of Government inscribed stock belonging to fathers or husbands. It simplifies procedure for probate and stamp duty purposes. There is nothing in the Bill beyond that, except that we are putting transmissions of inscribed stock on the same basis as those of Savings Bank money. I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 and 2 put and passed.

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

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

CONTRACTORS' AND WORKMEN'S LIEN ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I move—

“That the Bill be now read a second time.”

The principle of this Bill is well known to all hon. members, who expressed approval of it on the initiatory stages. It provides for giving protection to sub-contractors in respect of any work they may do for contractors.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1 to 12, both inclusive, put and passed.

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

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

The House adjourned at 10.40 p.m.