

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER 1921

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Mr. NOTT: He was somewhat doubtful as to whether the Minister was justified in looking at matters with such a pleased countenance, considering that during the past year they had probably had the best season on record in Queensland for very many years, and, when they looked at the tremendous loss incurred on the railways during the past year and saw that the loss worked out at £2 10s. per head of the population, it called for very grave consideration on the part of the people.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The money is not lost at all. It is in the pockets of the producers and the workers.

Mr. NOTT: On page 7 of the Commissioner's report it was stated that the deficit last year was £1,739,475. The Minister appeared to be very pleased that the gross earnings per train mile had increased by 4d. It was very gratifying to see improvements in any direction, but, when they found that the expenditure had increased by 1s. 1½d. per train mile, things did not appear so satisfactory. The Minister claimed that a great part of those costs were unavoidable.

On page 8 of the Commissioner's report was an interesting table showing that an increased expenditure of nearly half a million pounds was due to advances in railway awards, automatic increases, and so on. Moreover, the railways suffered indirectly, as a result of the operation of many awards, because a number of them had increased the cost of operating private enterprises very considerably, with the result that many of those enterprises had curtailed production and had been compelled to employ fewer hands than they would have been able to keep at work if the wages were not quite so high. That decreased production, whether agricultural or mining or otherwise, necessarily was reflected in a reduced tonnage for the railways.

On page 13 of his report the Commissioner said that, had the rates and fares in Queensland been increased to the same extent as in other Australian States, New Zealand, and South Africa, and had Queensland's tonnage improved to the same extent as on some of the other railways, the financial results of the twelve months would have shown to better advantage. No doubt anybody would realise that, if fares and freights had increased and the tonnage had increased also, the railways would have been less of a losing concern during the past year than they were.

It was regrettable to know, as the Commissioner told them, that on one line where a tonnage of 850 was carried ten years ago only 672 tons was carried during the past year, equal to a decrease of 21 per cent. Particularly was such a decrease regrettable because there should have been a very considerable increase in a ten-year period, and because last year was probably the best seasonal year Queensland had ever seen.

Another regrettable fact was that so much railway line and so many sheds and even railway stations had been started and carried to a certain point and then abandoned, and that in many instances railway material had been removed from the districts in which the work was going on, such as on the Murgon-Proston line and the Mount Edwards line.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must discuss that question on the railway construction vote.

Mr. NOTT: He bowed to the Chairman's ruling, of course, but the fact that they had so much dead money was very regrettable.

Mr. Nott.]

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

TUESDAY, 18 OCTOBER, 1921.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 10.30 a.m.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

Question stated—That £112,641 be granted for "Railways—General Establishment."

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*): He recognised that the most important function of railways was the development of the State in general; and the railway system of Queensland had done a great deal in that direction in the past and would play an important part in the future development of the State. That was one of the reasons why Queensland had done right in adopting the narrow gauge system, because with a narrow gauge railway they were certainly able to get a greater mileage for the same cost, and that was of paramount importance to a State of very long distances like Queensland, as the only way in which the territory could be properly developed was by the construction of railways. Had Queensland adopted a wider gauge in the past, there was no question but that the same amount of money would have been invested in a much less mileage of railway. He advocated the principle of laying down light railways such as were built in sugar centres to act as feeders in agricultural districts. In regard to the general management of the railways, the Secretary for Railways seemed to be very well satisfied with the economics effected during the past year.

Several HONOURABLE MEMBERS indulging in conversation in a loud tone,

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I appeal to hon. members not to converse in such loud tones, not only out of respect for the speaker, but particularly out of consideration for the "Hansard" staff.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Another regrettable fact was that they had so many lines in Queensland which were built to a dead end, and, if a number of the dead ends were linked up, it would afford increased facilities for moving stock from one place to another, and would also relieve the congestion of some of the present lines.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman that on this vote he is quite in order in discussing the administration of the department, but what he is now referring to is a matter of policy, and that can be dealt with on the vote for railway construction.

Mr. NOTT: The Commissioner for Railways referred in his report to the necessity in the future of increasing the loads to be carried, and also the constructing of heavier engines and the strengthening of railway bridges.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman will be quite in order in discussing that aspect of the question.

Mr. NOTT: The matter he was speaking of was directly connected with that. In the event of the Yarraman-Nanango line being completed, it would immediately necessitate the strengthening of a number of bridges to carry heavier loads; and the construction of that line would lessen the congestion that now existed on the North Coast line. The locomotives would then be able to bring a great deal of produce from that district by a shorter route to Brisbane. Another factor in connection with Queensland railways, and one which it was very hard to avoid, was the centralisation of the railway system. In some countries attempts had been made by various methods to avoid that, but in Queensland they had to put up with the system as they found it. If some of the railway lines were connected, it would probably save a great deal of expense in the strengthening of the permanent track, and the locomotives that they now had would be useful for a considerably extended period. He recognised that many of the locomotives of to-day were in such a condition that they did not pull the loads that they should. On a line that he travelled over, engines had often to make more than one attempt to get over a ridge. Anyone standing on a railway station and knowing anything about the fitting of engines would admit that very often the engines sent out were not in good order, and consequently had to pull lighter loads than they should do if they were in good order.

Again, it appeared to him, as a traveller on the railways, that some saving could be effected with regard to the coal used on the railways. The coal used in the present day on the railways appeared not to be of as good quality as the coal used some years ago. Whether it was that, owing to the high rate of wages, the same care was not taken in cleaning the coal, he did not know. He would like to know if analyses had been made of the present-day coal as compared with the coal used some years ago. An ordinary passenger travelling on a train could see the tremendous amount of clinker and other stuff that was blown in through the carriage windows.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The hon. member might ask if any attention is paid to the inspector's report with regard to the coal. That is an important matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Superior coal is now being obtained from the State coal mines opening up in Central and North Queensland.

[Mr. Nott.

Mr. NOTT: He was pleased to hear that good coal was being obtained from the State mines, and he hoped that the Minister would see that the quality was kept up.

Mr. GLEDSON: The department gets coal as cheap as it can be got in any part of the world.

Mr. NOTT: That might be so, but at the same time the quality was not as good as it used to be, speaking generally. Perhaps this might be another instance of how they were endeavouring to get out large amounts of coal, as the rate of wages was so high, without taking the trouble that was formerly taken to clean the coal. It might be that in the effort to show a profit they were not so careful to see that the coal was of so good a quality as it used to be.

The Minister had pointed out that there had been a tremendous falling off in the carriage of goods on some lines last year, especially in connection with minerals. On page 9 of the Commissioner's report there were some interesting figures given in the analysis of revenue from goods traffic. There had been increases, for instance, on minerals of 9.36 per cent.; agricultural produce, 20.66 per cent.; wool, 21.56 per cent.; general merchandise, 6.13 per cent.; and live stock, 34 per cent.; although the loss on the railways generally was very high. It was significant that there was only an increase of 6.13 per cent. of general merchandise carried. That was a direct indication that the purchasing power of the people in the country districts was considerably lessened. That might be attributable to the fact that the people who lived away from the centres of population were economising in every possible way and cutting out extras in the way of groceries.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): He considered that this was a vote which should be dispassionately discussed, because it was one in which the Opposition were very much interested. Any criticism which they offered was not for the purpose of embarrassing the Minister, the Commissioner, or the officials of the department, but to give assistance in the carrying out of the operations of the department, so that settlement would be promoted and the primary producers helped. He was inclined to think that personalities might be avoided in discussing the vote. He was quite aware that the Minister must be somewhat overstrung owing to the deplorable condition into which this great department had fallen, and he regretted that the hon. gentleman had allowed himself to be personal in his references to the hon. member for Oxley. There was no question that the member for Oxley was a distinct acquisition to the debating power of that Chamber. Whether they agreed or disagreed with what the hon. member said, undoubtedly he gave a considerable amount of study to matters which he brought before the Chamber, and every hon. member could learn something from his speeches.

The Minister had been somewhat disingenuous in reference to himself (Mr. Appel) in saying he had advocated increased freights. The hon. gentleman said ("Hazard," page 1396)—

"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."

The Minister repeated that statement, apparently with the intention of convincing the public outside that he (Mr. Appel) had been a direct advocate of such an increase. It was just as well to quote what he actually had said. The quotation would be found in "Hansard," volume cxxxi., 1918, page 2542, on a general discussion which took place on the management of the railways, the question of retrenchment, and the manner in which the railways should be run. Replying to an interjection by the hon. member for Bowen, "Do the railways pay in your district?" he (Mr. Appel) said—

"They ought to pay, judging by the number of passengers and the amount of produce carried, but he was not prepared to say that they did pay. They wished to see them pay, and, if necessary, the freights would have to be increased in order to enable that end to be achieved. Their only stipulation was this: That, if rates were raised in agricultural and dairying districts, they should be raised in connection with the carrying of every member of the community. 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. To say that a certain section of the community should escape the increased freights was a gross injustice. He could only hope that, judging by the attitude of the Minister, the hon. gentleman would see that equal justice would be meted out to all. The Government would find that, if that policy were carried out, every member of the community would be prepared to face the increased burden. He realised, with other hon. members, that it was inevitable that wages should be increased in the department. He had every hope that, judging by what had fallen from the Minister, in the public Press, in speaking to deputations, and on the floor of the House, a consistent policy would be carried out, whereby every member of the community would be called upon to pay his quota to the increased taxation in connection with railway traffic. In connection with local authority lines, and what might be termed private lines, it had been found necessary to impose a higher rate both for passengers and freights, in order to make the lines pay, and the State would have to do the same. If the Government made every person pay, irrespective of being a suburban or country passenger, there would be very little objection made by those who had to meet the increased payments."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: He said the Railway Department differed from all other departments in the State; it was a business proposition, and should be run on business lines. It was a matter which affected every member of the community, and should be made a payable proposition. If it were necessary, for the purpose of carrying out that policy, to increase the passenger fares and freights, then, so long as every member of the community was dealt with equitably in the same manner, so far as he personally was concerned, and speaking as a representative of an agricultural and dairying electorate, his support would be accorded for the purpose of making the railways of Queensland a

paying and effective proposition. That was the opinion he held to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: My quotation from your speech did you an injustice.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He did not know that it did. The Minister made the same statement on two occasions. The opinion which he held to-day was exactly the opinion he held in 1918 when speaking on the Railway Estimates. For whose benefit were the railways constructed? Listening to the debate, he had almost come to the conclusion that

they were constructed entirely for [11.30 a.m.] the benefit of those employed on the railways and not for the development of the State. It seemed to him that, because there was what was termed a "railway vote" which had to be looked after, in many instances they forgot the primary object for which railways were constructed. As he had pointed out in that speech of his in 1918, the standard of wages paid to those employed on the railways must be a high one. He had always held that the State should be a model employer and should pay a good standard rate of wage, but it should also require a good standard of work in return. The Minister, in his speech, had stated that the large increase in the number of railway employees had not been effected by the present Administration, but had been effected by the previous Administration. If that was a fact, was it not extraordinary that during the whole of the administration of the previous Government the railways were practically a paying proposition? If the contention of the Minister was correct, despite the fact that the number of employees had not been so great as under the previous Administration, the railways to-day were responsible for an accumulated deficit of practically £6,500,000. In looking over the speech delivered by the Minister, he noticed that the hon. gentleman had singled out only a portion of the period. The hon. gentleman referred to the year 1912-13—when, he stated, the number of employees in the Railway Department amounted to 13,982—and the year 1914-14—when, the hon. gentleman said, they numbered 14,965, or an increase of 983 for the period. The hon. gentleman also pointed out that in the year 1920 the number of employees in the Railway Department was 16,823, and in the year 1921 the number amounted to 15,899, or a decrease of 924. Hon. members on the Opposition side of the Chamber had pointed out that it was during the period between 1913-14 and 1920-21 that the trouble occurred. The total number of employees in 1913-14 was 14,965, and the number had increased in 1920 to 16,823.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The increase is larger for the last three years of the Denham Administration than it was in the six years of the Labour Administration.

HON. J. G. APPEL: During the Denham Administration the railways were a payable proposition, and, furthermore, during that period the rolling-stock and station buildings, etc., were in first-class order. But it was admitted by the Government that the rolling-stock was in a deplorable condition at the present time, and that very necessary improvements were required so far as station buildings were concerned. During the previous Administration, when railway sidings or loading-yards or banks were required, they were constructed by the department, but to-day no money was available for the erection

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of those necessary adjuncts to the railway system. If a loading-yard was required, those who desired to forward live stock had to erect it themselves. If they required a siding for business purposes, which all meant traffic to the Railway Department, they were required to pay for that siding. The department apparently no longer had the necessary funds to carry out those operations which any private business firm would carry out when they saw an opportunity of increasing their revenue. Of course, the Minister made a great point of the fact that under the present Administration greater care and consideration had been given to those who were employed in the department. He should like to think that that was the fact; but, unfortunately, those employees of the Railway Department with whom he had come in contact certainly were not contented. He did not know that there was a more discontented service in the State. In that celebrated Speech from the Throne, for which the taxpayers of the State had to pay so much, there was a definite promise made—

“It is intended to introduce as early as convenient a Bill to provide a super-annuation scheme for railway servants.”

What had been done to give effect to that promise?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The railway servants will not agree amongst themselves.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The matter should have been submitted for the consideration of the Chamber.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not before there is something like unanimity amongst the railway servants themselves.

HON. J. G. APPEL: It was for the Government to formulate a scheme. There was a definite promise made, and why had nothing been done in that direction? He had in his hand a paper called the “Advocate,” of 10th October, 1921, which dealt with a state of affairs that reflected credit on no Administration, but particularly the present Administration, because it declared that past Administrations had no regard for the welfare of the workers on their railway system, and that they proposed to improve the conditions. The article said—

“Our protest to the Railway Commissioner elicited the information that the framed tents were being sold because he had no money for their removal and re-erection where required by the houseless railway workers.

“One feels justified in asking: Does the Labour party think that the cry of ‘no money’ to provide those unfortunate railway toilers with habitations fit for white people a sufficient excuse with which to justify their conscience after six years of office, and at the same time openly sell framed tents to other people?”

“We hasten to say that sufficient money to provide the labour to supply all the necessitous with a framed tent has been spent in less deserving directions than that, and make no mistake about it, the fettlers know full well what is meant by that.”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your Government spent £4,000 in the last two years of office, and we have spent £21,000 in the last two years of our administration.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That was no excuse for a Government which particularly claimed

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to have done so much. He did not care what the previous Administration spent; if the previous Administration had no regard to that kind of thing, they ought to be condemned: but what judgment must be passed on an Administration which claimed to be the guardian of the interests of the workers? If £21,000 was not sufficient, then they should have spent £49,000, and the expense should have been provided for. They must remember that the railway revenue had not been decreasing. It had consistently increased, and, although the Minister practically contended that during the years of war there was of necessity a reduced railway revenue, they knew that there was a very large increase.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say that.

HON. J. G. APPEL: They had large amounts of wheat, wool, meat, and other products which were required by the allies, and consequently the years of war were possibly the most prosperous they had ever had in their primary industries, and consequently the most prosperous for the railway receipts, so that there was no excuse for not carrying out necessary arrangements. If it were correct—and the Minister had not denied it—of what value were their protestations? They were condemned by the very unfortunate workers whom they claimed to represent, and for whom they promised that, when once they were returned to office, they would do so much.

Another matter of very great importance—for to his mind the whole management of the railways centred round it—was the subject of political control. If the Commissioner for Railways were absolutely exempt in the conduct of the business of the department from political control and interference—

Mr. COLLINS: Do you mean Conservative political control?

HON. J. G. APPEL: He did not care what Administration was concerned. Under the previous Administration the Commissioner practically had a free hand.

Mr. COLLINS: He did not.

HON. J. G. APPEL: What did the hon. member for Bowen know about it? No such interference took place with the Commissioner as had been the case under the present Administration. So far as the requisite number of employees and the dispensing with those who were not doing their duty to the State—because although it was the duty of the State to act as a model employer, likewise it was the duty of those employed to act as model employees—if all that were left entirely in the hands of the Commissioner without interference by the Administration, there would be a different result.

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

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The Opposition had constantly cried out earlier in the session, “Give us the Railway Estimates.” He had been listening to the debates since they had got to those Estimates, and so far the criticism of hon. members opposite had been very weak indeed. The Nationalist wing of the Opposition had made themselves quite clear, because their leader, who, he took it, spoke for them—if he did not, they must be in a very disorganised state—had no hesitation in saying that there should be

increases in fares and freights—in other words, that the railways should be made to pay. The Country party seemed timid about declaring themselves. Perhaps when the deputy leader got up they would have a declaration from him on that question.

He (Mr. Collins) was not one of those who altogether believed that the railways should be made to pay. Railways, in his opinion, were highways, and should be so used for opening up the country. Good roads were needed for the progress of any country. Did they pay?

Mr. MOORE: Yes.

Mr. COLLINS: They paid in an indirect manner, but the cost of building and maintaining them in good order was defrayed by a tax on the unimproved value of land. Nobody looked for dividends from roads, and railways were just as essential—and probably more essential—for the development of the country. The railways to a large extent had made an unimproved land value of about £60,000,000 in this State, which was considerably more than the amount mentioned in the Commissioner's report as having been spent upon the building of the railways. He agreed with the hon. member for Oxley that there ought to be more settlement alongside the railways, and that that land should be brought under cultivation. Where the hon. member had failed in his criticism was to point out a method whereby they could bring about that close settlement.

Mr. MOORE: Land taxation will not do it.

Mr. COLLINS: He believed land taxation would do it, if it was made sufficiently high. There were large areas of land alongside the railways which were not being put to their best use. It was impossible for railways to pay when passing through standing scrub, or with scrub within 10 or 12 miles on each side of the railway. The railways should be credited to some extent for the increased value added to the land alongside the railways. On one particular occasion when he travelled with the Public Works Commission to Maleny, a place not very far from Landsborough, and where there was a good road, he saw very large tracts of country in the same state of nature as when Captain Cook sailed up the coast, with the exception that the valuable timber had been taken out, but the scrub was still standing. In that district there were some of the most fertile lands in the whole of Queensland.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: With the addition of lantana.

Mr. COLLINS: The lantana could be easily removed, and it did not injure the land. There was sufficient good land between Brisbane and Gympie alone to maintain the present population of Queensland.

At 11.55 a.m.,

Mr. FLETCHER called attention to the state of the Committee.

Quorum formed.

Mr. COLLINS: He would watch the hon. member for Port Curtis closely in the future, and would retaliate when the opportunity offered. They had heard hon. members opposite making comparisons with various countries, but there was no other country in the civilised world with a population similar to the population of Queensland which had as many miles of railway as they had in this State. In his travels through Queensland he was surprised that the railways were paying

as well as they were, considering the sparse population scattered over the large areas of the country through which the railways ran.

He hoped that the Government would push along with the construction of the North Coast Railway from Farleigh to Proserpine.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would like to point out to the hon. gentleman that he is not in order in discussing the construction of new railways or the extension of existing lines on this vote. That should be dealt with on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. COLLINS: He would like to point out that he was dealing with the Commissioner's report.

The CHAIRMAN: The Commissioner's report deals with this vote and also with the Loan Vote; but this vote deals with the administration of the railways, whereas the matter the hon. gentleman is referring to is a matter of policy.

Mr. COLLINS: On page 4 of his report the Commissioner mentioned the construction of the railway from Farleigh to Proserpine—a distance of 68 miles.

The CHAIRMAN: Quite so. The hon. gentleman will be perfectly in order in discussing that on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. COLLINS: He took it that in dealing with railways in general they could make reference to railways of which portions had already been constructed. He was going to urge the Minister to push ahead with the line from Farleigh to Proserpine. The Commissioner, on page 42 of his report, made reference to fuel, and pointed out that on the Great Northern and Bowen railways the consumption last year was 47,234 tons. The Commissioner stated—

“Coal for the Great Northern and Bowen railways is imported from South Queensland at a cost landed in Townsville of 42s 3d. per ton. Recently a contract was let for the supply of 20,000 tons of Blair Athol coal, at a cost in Townsville of 45s. 6d. per ton.

“About 50 miles from Bowen exists a most extensive field of splendid coal, where the State has opened up a mine capable of producing all the coal required in North Queensland. In 1916 a railway line to connect this coal mine with the existing railway was commenced, and it was anticipated this line would have been sufficiently advanced to allow of coal being obtained for use on the Northern railways in March last. Unfortunately, these anticipations were not realised, and apparently it will be some time to come before the railway is completed.”

He understood, from the Secretary for Railways that morning, that the dispute on the Bowen coal field line had been settled, and he trusted that the hon. gentleman would do everything possible to complete that railway.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will give additional employment.

Mr. COLLINS: He was glad to know that the Minister intended to put on additional men. The completion of that line would mean a considerable saving to the Northern railway system. The

[12 noon] Commissioner pointed out that the Blair Athol coal was costing 45s. 6d. per ton. He wished to quote the following report on some coal tests made on

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the Northern Railways, contained in the "Bowen Independent" of 8th instant—

"COAL TESTS ON NORTHERN RAILWAYS.
"BOWEN COAL FIRST.

"In connection with recent steam tests made on the Great Northern Railway with Bowen, Blair Athol, and South Queensland coal (says 'Townsville Daily Bulletin') the General Manager (Mr. A. J. Crowther) on Monday said in the tests the same conditions as nearly as possible were observed. The result placed Bowen coal first, Blair Athol second, and the Southern coal a bad third. Both Bowen and Blair Athol were found to be particularly good steaming coal and gave off very little ash, the firemen having no need to clean their fires on the trip between Townsville and Charters Towers. With the Southern coal, however, the ash boxes had to be raked out four times. In the case of the Bowen coal the percentage of ash in the smoke box was considerably less than in the case of Blair Athol, and therein was shown the superiority of the Bowen coal. Mr. Crowther said the tests had proved conclusively how valuable the Bowen product would be for North Queensland, especially for the railways."

That would be very interesting information to Northern members, showing as it did the value of the Bowen State coalmine. The consumption of coal on the Great Northern and Bowen Railways was 47,234 tons per year, or a little over 900 tons per week, which meant that the State coalmine would start off on a good mark; in other words, they would have to produce over 1,000 tons per week to supply their own local requirements. The leader of the Opposition had referred to the store on the Bowen Railway having shown a loss of £1,758 last year, but that amount was spread over the whole time the railway had been in course of construction. He was drawing the Minister's attention to it, because from time to time when he had been along the railway line they had complained about the high cost of provisions at that store. He wanted it to be made known through "Hansard" that, according to the Auditor-General's report, the store showed a loss of £1,758.

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

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): The hon. member for Albert had put his finger on the way the railways should be conducted—that was, on business lines. It was a most peculiar thing that some hon. members seemed to imagine that it was impossible for a public activity to be conducted on similar lines to what they would conduct their own business on. He had had experience in local authority work, and, when he had suggested that the local authority was not being conducted on business lines, he had been met with the statement, "If you think it is possible to conduct local authorities on exactly similar lines to what you conduct your own business on, you are making a grievous blunder." It seemed to him that a great deal of the trouble in regard to the railways was that they were not conducted on business lines. They would have a different result if business lines were followed. The Commissioner was a capable and excellent officer, and in his excellent report in dealing with the financial position of the railways he stated—

"All these matters, taken into consideration with the fact that the tonnage of the

department's greatest source of revenue (goods and mineral traffic) reduced from 3,715,245 tons in 1917-18 to 3,445,315 tons in 1920-21, and live stock from 439,196 tons to 422,335 tons during the same period, and that our rates and fares have not increased in keeping with the expenditure, explain the present financial position of the railways."

That was to say, that, irrespective of any increases in the price of materials and wages, and changes through altered conditions of labour, there had been no addition to the ordinary working expenses of the department. He would like to ask the Minister whether he would run a business for himself on those lines?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There is no analogy. A government has the function and responsibility of developing the country, and a private company has not. That is a fundamental difference.

Mr. MAXWELL: According to the hon. gentleman's reasoning, the deficits on the railways were not deficits at all; yet they could not get away from the fact that there was a deficit last year of £1,750,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You could avoid the deficits by increasing fares and freights; but is it a sound policy?

Mr. MAXWELL: Hon. members opposite were always holding up the State enterprises and saying, "Look at the fine revenue we are getting from them," but they could not make such a boast in connection with the railways.

Mr. STOPFORD: Why did you not follow out your reasoning in connection with the Kangaroo Point ferries?

Mr. MAXWELL: He would remind the hon. member that he did try to follow out that reasoning, but there were certain men associated with the council who held similar views to those of hon. members opposite. In one instance one alderman said, "That is the end of a road where the ferry is, and the people should be carried free on the ferry." In the development of a country, it was essential that some sacrifices should be made, but not to the extent of having a deficit of £1,750,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How are you going to remedy the matter—by reducing freights and fares?

Mr. MAXWELL: The doctor prescribed when he was called in. There was no reason for him to say how he would conduct the business unless he was in the department to see the causes of the evil. It had been stated that there had been political influence in connection with the railways, and in that connection he wished to quote an extract from the "Militant" of 1st September, 1919. The late Hon. T. J. Ryan, referring to the position created on the Northern Railway by the meatworkers' strike, said, "The Government must govern." The then Secretary for Railways (Hon. J. A. Fihelly) said, "If the Labour Government decides to send a train or a wheelbarrow somewhere it must get out of office if it is not going to have it sent there." The reply of some gentlemen who were associated with the Queensland Railway Union and with the "Militant" was—

"Certainly the Government must govern, but that Government must receive its instructions how to govern from those responsible for its creation. A Labour Government must govern, not according

[*Mr. Collins.*]

to the whim of Mr. Ryan, or to back up the unpardonable blundering of an egotistical junior Cabinet Minister, but according to the principles of the Labour movement."

If that were true—and he would not say it was—it explained exactly the position as expressed by hon. members of the Opposition—that there must be some controlling factor, which said, "You must do as we say." In another paragraph the "Militant" said—

"And throughout this whole sorry business there is one person who cuts, at the best, a most ignominious figure—the Hon. J. A. Fihelly (Minister for Railways). If reports be correct, his colleagues have to thank him for the unfortunate position in which they find themselves."

He had a very vivid recollection of a certain amount of money having been expended in order to gain a knowledge of the American and other railway systems. With that object in view, the then Secretary for Railways made a trip at an expenditure of something like £1,800. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman had presented a report setting out what it would be advisable to do for the better conduct of the railways. He had not yet heard what ideas on railway management the present Treasurer secured in America and Europe, but he did know that some time after the hon. gentleman's return to Queensland he was transferred from the position of Secretary for Railways to that of Treasurer—possibly a more comfortable position. It was very easy for any Minister or head of a business concern to save money by sacking men—or, as it was now termed, by the "deflation" of workmen. The problem they had to solve was how to overcome the existing difficulty in their midst by giving employment to a number of men, and not by discharging them. They had had a pitiable exhibition in various Government departments, particularly in the Railway Department. He was not saying a word against what the Economy Board had done—it might have done the right thing—but there were certain things which appealed to him as a business man, and in which he did not think a fair deal had been given. Certain men had been "deflated" because they had reached the age limit, and certain other men occupying good positions had been dealt with similarly, although they had not reached the age limit. He referred to the position held by Mr. J. G. Brown. He would not like to say that the reason why Mr. Brown had been "deflated," or asked to retire before he reached the age for retirement, was because he had driven a train in Townsville at a certain time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The reason was that we had surplus officers and gave no exemption to anyone; the officers went, as well as the wages employees, if a surplus number was employed. We engaged no more labour from outside, the work being done by those who were in the service.

Mr. MAXWELL: He was very glad to have that statement from the hon. gentleman, as he was not the only one who held the view he had expressed. The hon. gentleman might remember that at the time he referred to certain threats had been made, but he accepted the Minister's assurance on the point. A great amount of good might have been done by the Government in connection with giving better housing conditions to those associated with their schools; but, as the

hon. member for Albert had pointed out, if they were to raise a healthy and virile race, they could not accomplish it by providing the shacks in which some fettlers and railway men, with their women folk and children, were compelled to live, ostracised from society and from city life. Surely not a Parliament existed which would object to those men and women, who were right out in the bush, getting better homes than they had. If the "Advocate" were right in what it had printed, it was a poor type of house in which those people lived.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: They are better now than ever they were.

Mr. MAXWELL: That might be. He ventured to say that the house he occupied was better than that which his father occupied when he came out to Queensland to assist in the pioneering work of the country. That did not alter the fact that these men and women desired special recognition.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are getting it. We spent £15,000 last year.

Mr. MAXWELL: That was not sufficient to do what was necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We cannot catch up with the arrears your Government left us.

Mr. MAXWELL: He did not care what Government did it. It was no good the hon. gentleman trying to sidestep the question like that. He did not want to say that this Government had done any worse than any other Government; but he was not going to allow them to take credit for all the legislation which had been passed for looking after the people, thus trying to make out another Government had not done their bit. There was the opportunity now to better the condition of these men, who with their women folk and children had to make big sacrifices, and whose only enjoyment was a decent roof to cover them. In connection with the New Settlers' League, a man had said to him, "All a man wants—all that is necessary—for him to live in the country are four walls and a roof; he does not want a ceiling in it." He did not agree with that. They had every right to consider those people. If, as the "Advocate" pointed out, that was the condition of affairs, the sooner it was altered the better. He would be quite prepared to vote the extra money necessary to give those people better conditions than they had to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did your party not do those things when they were in power?

Mr. MAXWELL: He was not responsible for what anybody did or did not do. He was quite prepared to assist the Government in providing better conditions for those people. The hon. member for Bremer referred to the question of apprenticeships, and he wanted to go a little further than that hon. member had done. If they desired to have proper tradesmen, there was only one way to have it, and that was by a compulsory system of apprenticeships. The Technical College was doing excellent work in that connection, but, if they were going to compel their boys and girls to learn the "three R's" in order to qualify for the battle of life, how much more necessary was it that they should be compelled to learn some trade or calling? By doing that they were going to make them a splendid asset to the State. He hoped the Minister would bear in mind that in creating more

Mr. Maxwell.]

unemployment by the deflation of a number of men in his department, he was going to create a problem that would be very difficult to solve. Let them try and reason together, and see if it was not possible for the various heads in the Chamber, and the various organisations outside, to come together with a view to try and solve that problem, because unemployment was one of the greatest detriments to the advancement of Queensland that they could have. They should boost Queensland up. They realised that Queensland was the greatest State in the Commonwealth, but she wanted to be allowed to grow in a proper manner, and she would progress when she got a change of Government, and not till then.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): In referring to the Commissioner's report, as he intended to do later on, he did not wish it to be taken that he was casting any reflection on the Commissioner or on the officers under him, because, no doubt, he had done the best he could under somewhat awkward conditions. Ever since the Labour Government came into power the losses in the Railway Department had been enormous. The figures for last year showed a condition of affairs that even the Secretary for Railways would admit was startling. The return on capital invested for the present year was the lowest on record, and things had gone from bad to worse. The deficits during the regime of the present Government had mounted to no less than £6,500,000. Every year since the present Government took office things have got worse, as the following return would show:—

Year.	Net Revenue.	Return on Capital per cent.
	£	£ s. d.
1914-15	1,379,355	3 13 9
1915-16	1,004,430	2 11 3
1916-17	828,444	2 1 0
1917-18	597,739	1 8 10
1918-19	280,426	0 13 1
1919-20	613,104	1 6 10
1920-21	281,814	0 11 11

The net return on capital became less each year, and the revenue per train mileage was reduced. The average return was shown in the Auditor-General's report to be 9s. 9d. per cent. Those losses were not due to any slump in the revenue, as the revenue had increased from £3,800,000 in 1914-15 to £5,380,000 for the last financial year. The improvement in returns was due to increased charges in the year 1919-20, when £1,000,000 more were received than revenue for the previous year. In the last financial year, with the greatest revenue on record, there was a deficit of £1,739,000 although the service all over the State had been reduced to a minimum. That showed that there must be something wrong. He did not think they could blame the Commissioner or his officers, because there must be some interference since the present Government came into power, which had altered things considerably. They had been told that the leader of the Nationalist party advocated an increase in the fares and freights on the railways, while, on the other hand, they were told that the Country party did not want any increase. On page 17 of his report, the Commissioner gave the sections which neither paid working expenses nor interest on the capital. The return showed that the total loss in the

Southern division amounted to £546,591, while the total loss in the Central division was £187,197, and in the Northern division £567,950. That showed a total loss for the Central and Northern divisions combined of £755,147 as against a total loss of £546,591 for the Southern division. It did not appear, therefore, that the increased fares and freights since the Labour Government came into power had affected the country districts very much. He did not expect that the railways would show enormous profits, but he did think that they should try and live within their means and keep their expenditure within their revenue. The figures he had quoted showed that freights and fares were favourable so far as the country districts were concerned.

On page 15 of his report—which was a very admirable report taking it all through—the Commissioner quoted some very interesting figures, and said—

“I think it my duty to point out that our business is not developing in proportion to our capital expenditure, whereas the position should really be reversed, as we are now paying a higher rate of interest than we did years ago. For instance, during the past ten years the capital expenditure has increased from £25,898,841 to £43,557,078, equal to 68 per cent., but the annual tonnage (including live stock) has only increased by 17 per cent. Moreover, the average tonnage per mile of open line has actually fallen from 852 tons per mile in 1910-11 to 672 tons in 1920-21, a drop of 180 tons (equal to 21 per cent.) per mile of open line.”

He thought they could all agree with the Commissioner when he said—

“From a national standpoint, and looking to the future, the opening up of the country for closer settlement by new railways is desirable, but from the standpoint of present railway management there can be no doubt that the construction of new lines has outpaced the growth of traffic; consequently the railways are over-capitalised for the amount of business done, as the revenue from increased tonnage hauled falls far short of paying the additional interest.”

That was the mistake, not only in the case of the railways, but in the case also of some of their State enterprises. Most hon. members would agree that what they [12.30 p.m.] required to make the railways pay was greater traffic on existing lines. Unfortunately—he did not know whether it was due to the actions of the Government—there had been a depression in business, and an absence of that feeling of security in the minds of the business community which was necessary to make them extend their businesses. Instead of doing that they had been doing the very opposite, with the result that there had been a reduced railway traffic.

The Commissioner also pointed out that the average cost per mile of railway in Queensland was lower than in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, New Zealand, or South Africa, but that the capital cost per head of population was very much higher here than in any other State. That was one of their difficulties. They had the very great mileage of 5,722 miles open for traffic, besides 30 miles of narrow-gauge State line in the Innisfail-Mourilyan tramway. The Commissioner also pointed out

[Mr. Maxwell.

that the length of new lines opened for traffic during the year was 67 miles, of which 15 miles were in the Southern division, 20 miles in the Central division, and 31 miles in the Northern division, and he proceeded to point out—

“In addition to the above lines, the sections Carnila southwards to Clairview (22 miles)”——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing those lines now.

Mr. PETRIE: He merely wished to touch upon them and congratulate the Minister upon the opening of the Mackay-St. Lawrence line. The strange thing was that they had had a Public Works Commission reporting on various railways, although he did not know when any of them were likely to be constructed. In 1914 quite a number of railways had been passed by Parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member may discuss railway construction on the loan vote.

Mr. PETRIE: By way of linking-up his remarks, he was going to point out the loss on unopened lines.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must deal with that question on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. PETRIE: No doubt, if some of those lines which were partially constructed were completed——

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has been long enough in the House to know that, when the Chairman gives a ruling, it must be observed. I hope he will obey my ruling. If he wants to discuss railway construction, he must do so on the Loan Estimates, to be found on pages 124 to 130.

Mr. PETRIE: He quite agreed with the ruling, but he was trying to show just by reference the loss which had accrued to the department through the non-completion of those lines.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member knows that all those lines are constructed out of loan money.

Mr. PETRIE: He knew that perfectly well, but the Chairman would admit that sometimes one must talk round a subject—as the Chairman found it necessary to do sometimes when out of the chair. He could see the difficulty that confronted the Commissioner. He was supposed to be supreme and free from all political influence. Whether that was so or not, the Opposition stood for that. It was to be regretted that, whether the department had been overloaded or not, it had been necessary to “deflate,” or dispense with the services of so many men. It had been stated by some people that there were ten men in places where one man would have been sufficient, but the Government probably could have done something more than they had done. They might have equalised matters somewhat, and probably found employment in other directions for those men of whom in the end they had to get rid. The shortage of money had been made the excuse, but for that shortage the Government had been a lot to blame. Now that the Government had been successful in obtaining money, he hoped the lines which had been started but not finished would be completed in the very near future, and that the unemployed question would be reduced

almost to a minimum. He congratulated the Commissioner and the department on the few accidents which had taken place ever since the railways first were started in Queensland, which showed that great care had been exercised by everybody. He congratulated the Commissioner on the estimable report he had presented to Parliament. The railways were a very big concern, in which £47,000,000 had been invested, and he hoped that the Commissioner and those under him would be able to show a decent return in the future and not have such enormous losses as had occurred during the past two years.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): As years went by, his faith in the severance of railways from political control increased. No good work could be accomplished until the Commissioner or Commissioners were free from interference by Ministers or any political party that might be in power.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You asked for it with regard to State Advances Corporation.

Mr. MORGAN: He asked for no such thing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your party asked for it with regard to the railways, too.

Mr. MORGAN: He had asked for no such thing. He was dealing with this matter as an individual, and from his own point of view. Until the railways were taken completely out of the control of the Government they would not succeed. It might be necessary to have more than one Commissioner appointed, but whether they had one Commissioner or more, the object should be to bring the railways to a successful issue so far as finance was concerned. In doing that there should be no necessity to increase fares and freights on the railways.

The PREMIER: Would you reduce the wages?

Mr. MORGAN: Earlier in the session he had quoted figures dealing with freights charged. Those figures had been supplied to him in 1920 by the Commissioner for Railways; but, notwithstanding that fact, the Secretary for Railways had interjected that he (Mr. Morgan) was misleading the Committee. He (Mr. Morgan) again challenged the Minister to say that those figures were not in operation to-day. The Minister had indulged in all the manoeuvring that a Minister could be guilty of, in order to prove that something which was black was white. The hon. gentleman, in moving the vote, had picked out figures from a year here and a year there. He was not in the Chamber when the hon. gentleman spoke, but he had been informed that, when the Minister gave those figures, he was really laughing at them himself.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. MORGAN: Anyone reading the hon. gentleman's speech would see how silly and ridiculous the figures were. He (Mr. Morgan) had quoted certain figures which had been supplied to him by the Commissioner in respect of freights on agricultural produce, flour, and butter, to port and up country for 200 miles, 500 miles, and 800 miles. He had quoted the freight on flour for truck loads to port and from Brisbane up country, and the Minister had interjected, “You are misleading the Committee.” That interjection appeared in all the Press,

Mr. Morgan.]

including the "Daily Standard," a paper supporting the Government, and in "Hansard." The hon. gentleman endeavoured to show that he (Mr. Morgan) was quoting wrong information, and that the figures had since been altered. He challenged the Minister to show that the figures were not the same to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You asked a question, and you got my reply to that question.

Mr. MORGAN: He had quoted figures dealing with truck loads and ton loads to port and from Brisbane up country on butter, and other items, for distances of 200, 500, and 800 miles.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What was your question, and what was my reply?

Mr. MORGAN: He had asked the hon. gentleman a question, and the reply showed how the hon. gentleman was endeavouring to mislead the Committee. He had asked the hon. gentleman, knowing that he was right—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Knowing that you were wrong.

Mr. MORGAN: He had asked the Minister the following question:—

"Will he inform the House in what direction freights—'To ports' and 'Up country'—on agricultural produce, flour, and butter now operating, differ from the rates operating in 1920?"

The Minister replied—

"Smaller quantities than truck loads sent to ports (or Wallangarra) have been reduced from 'A' class to 'M' class, plus 20 per cent. Mixed consignments of produce (not including butter)—i.e., different kinds of produce from one consignor—are now allowed to be loaded in one truck to get the benefit of the 'truck load' rate, which is lower than charging each class of produce separately."

The figures he (Mr. Morgan) quoted were for truck loads, and not for smaller quantities.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You were dealing with the whole of the railway position.

Mr. MORGAN: It did not alter the position with respect to flour coming down in truck loads. He had distinctly shown, according to "Hansard," that he was dealing with flour, and produce generally, in truck loads or ton lots. If butter, flour, cheese, or other produce was sent in smaller quantities, it would cost a higher rate.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: A lower rate—that is important.

Mr. MORGAN: "Hansard" would show that he was dealing with truck loads or ton lots, and the Minister had endeavoured to mislead, not only the Committee, but the people in the country, by stating that he (Mr. Morgan) had quoted wrong figures.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I repeat that.

Mr. MORGAN: The figures that he quoted, which were supplied to him by the Commissioner for Railways in 1920, were in operation to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are trying to mislead the Committee.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman was a past master in that art.

[Mr. Morgan.]

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You read the question and my answer, and you will see that I am right.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman's speech was the joke of the whole House and the country. The Premier had also quoted figures dealing with freight on produce in Victoria and Queensland, but the hon. gentleman had quoted the "To port" rate instead of the "Up country" rate. The "To port" rate in some cases was 100 per cent. cheaper than the "Up country" rate. There were hon. members opposite representing strugglers in the country, yet they sat still and allowed the country people, such as railway fitters and other supporters of the Government, to be bled white by paying 100 per cent. more for the necessaries of life than the people in the city.

Mr. COLLINS: You want to increase fares and freights.

Mr. MORGAN: Mr. Hunter, who was one-time member for Maranoa, and now Agent-General, when in opposition, used to come along with his "hardy annual" for a reduction in freights on the necessaries of life to the country districts, and he (Mr. Morgan), although sitting on the Government side of the House, left the Government benches and supported Mr. Hunter in his advocacy of a reduction of freights on such necessities of life as oatmeal, jams, sugar, and tea. He had been consistent and honest throughout his whole political career in that matter. The people, just as they could buy dried fruits at the one price throughout Australia as well as at Mildura, should be able to buy oatmeal and other necessities of life just as cheaply in Charleville as the people in Brisbane. The railway deficit was not caused by low railway freights and fares, because the railway freights and fares were not low.

Mr. STOPFORD: What is the cause?

Mr. MORGAN: It was caused through the overstaffing of the railways. He would give the Minister's own figures to prove his contention. Opposition members had contended that the railways had been overstaffed, and pointed out that in many instances there were three men employed where two would have been sufficient to do the work. That had been his contention all along. He was going to use the Minister's own figures.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Use the whole lot. Go back to 1912 for the purposes of comparison.

Mr. MORGAN: Their contention that the railways had been overstaffed was borne out by the Minister's own figures. In 1920 there were 16,823 men employed, and 15,899 in 1921, or a decrease of 924, showing that in that year the Government had in some way dispensed with 924 employees. In 1920 there were 10,443,619 train miles run, and in 1921 there were 10,735,723, or an increase of 292,104, although there were 924 employees less. That bore out the contention of the Opposition that the railways were overstaffed.

Mr. STOPFORD: There is less traffic.

Mr. MORGAN: If the Minister could have shown that he (Mr. Morgan) had misled the Committee with regard to that matter, he would have been glad for the hon. gentleman to do so.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You have given me nothing to reply to.

Mr. MORGAN: When he had asked the Minister previously about the matter, he had said that he would deal with it on the Estimates, but he had not done so.

Mr. STOFFORD: Why were you not here when the Minister spoke? (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: Ask Mr. Kirwan. (Laughter.) The railways would not be a success until the political control which was exercised at the present time was done away with. He had every confidence in the Commissioner, whom he recognised to be a good man; but he was only a figurehead in the Railway Department—he had to do what he was told by the Minister, who had had no experience. The Minister might be just as good a Minister as he (Mr. Morgan) would make—he meant nothing personal. The Commissioner was being wasted, and was having his reputation spoiled. If by any chance he came to be looking for a job in another part of the world, and it was shown that there was a deficiency of £1,700,000 on the Queensland railways, the people there would say, "This is not the man for us; he was a failure in Queensland." The Commissioner was not a failure. He was compelled by the present Government—either by the action of the Minister or the Cabinet—to do things which were detestable to him, and which he knew were not right. If he was able to run the railways in his own way, there would not be a deficit, and there would be no necessity to increase fares and freight.

There was very little difference between the fares and freights in Queensland and those in other States. The railways could be made self-supporting if the Commissioner was allowed to compel the employees to give a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. Everybody knew that political influence was exercised. He (Mr. Morgan) had travelled through places in every electorate where thousands of pounds had been spent through political control. At one place near his electorate, in Chinchilla, £5,000 was spent on the eve of an election for certain work which was neither necessary nor useful. He would admit that political influence might be exerted by the Liberal or Country party, as well as by the Labour party—he was not putting the whole of the blame on the shoulders of the Labour party—but no one could deny that political influence of that kind was being exerted to-day, and the sooner the railways were taken away from political control the better it would be for everybody concerned.

He would like next to deal with cattle freights. The cattle industry was depressed, but the Government seemed to be against its re-establishment by assisting those engaged in the industry. The Government were prepared to sacrifice something in order to assist the Mount Morgan Company to carry on the mine, but they were evidently not prepared to assist the stockowners nor the employees in the industries connected with cattle-raising by making a general reduction in the freights on stock. While the Government had been in power they had increased the freights on stock by 63 per cent., which was an enormous increase. The cattle-owners were paying that much more than they paid in 1914.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): One had only to study carefully the reports of the Commis-

sioner for Railways and of the Auditor-General to realise that from the standpoint of a State enterprise the railways had been a gigantic failure. Both those

[2 p.m.] reports spoke in no uncertain terms in condemnation of State control of even such a utility as the railways. They all realised that on sentimental grounds there were certain utilities which should be controlled by the State or by public bodies. The railway systems of Queensland and other States were such that the public had to pay very dearly for that sentimentality. The financial position clearly indicated that. The Government had a monopoly of control, but that monopoly involved a great danger that the enterprise would be run, not on a financial basis, but rather in a slipshod manner. When the Government entered into competition with outside industries they had to adopt businesslike methods, and there was more probability of having a payable proposition in such cases than there was when a monopoly was held. In the railway system they had a direct monopoly. They recognised that they had been faced with a great war and surrounded with difficult circumstances. The cost of material had increased greatly; but, even that, taking into consideration the increased earnings of the railways, did not account for the financial position they were in. In 1914-1915 the railways showed a surplus of £48,651. In the ensuing years that surplus was gradually turned into a deficiency, which became greater with each succeeding year. In 1916 the deficiency was £508,000; in 1917, £737,000; in 1918 it jumped to £1,028,000; in 1919 to £1,421,000; in 1920 it decreased slightly to £1,229,000; but in 1921—three years after the great war had ended—they had a deficiency of £1,739,000. Those railways had been built with money borrowed at 4 per cent. and 4½ per cent. Now, when the Treasurer was redeeming Treasury bonds, he was offering 6½ per cent. for 4 per cent. bonds, while the price of issue had come down from par to £98. They must realise the serious position in which the railways would be placed when they had to pay a larger amount of interest for the money they borrowed. The railways were going to become a burden which it would be almost impossible for the State to bear, unless they were efficiently managed and economically controlled. In the last year the cost of materials had been reduced. Surely nothing except bad management and outside control could cause the deficiency to increase at such an alarming rate and the railways become a burden upon every citizen of the State. In 1914-1915 the railways showed a return of £3 16s. 7d. per cent., which had dropped down to the insignificant amount of 9s. 9d. per cent. last year, notwithstanding the fact that the earnings in 1920-1921 were the largest the railways had ever had in the history of the State. They were £5,279,412—an increase over the preceding year of £319,262, and over those of 1919-1920 of £1,979,553. The Minister advanced some reasons for the great deficiency during the past year. He stated it was due largely to the state of the oversea markets affecting the transport of primary products, and the fact of the mines closing up affecting the carriage of their mineral wealth. The corollary to that, if they looked at the report of the Commissioner for Railways, was the fact that

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practically every branch of the revenue last year showed an increase.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not say that. I said that the comparatively low freights and fares, and the increase of wages, fuel, and material, were causes of the deficit. I was referring particularly to the first three months of this financial year.

Mr. GREEN: A large quantity of material during the last twelve months had been reduced considerably in price.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some of it was purchased at an increase of 400 per cent. on pre-war prices.

Mr. GREEN: Not on the prices of the preceding year. They all knew that the price of iron, oils, and other materials had been reduced during the last two years compared with the price during the war period. They found every branch of revenue showed an increase, with the exception of sheep and metals. On the whole, the railways had enjoyed a prosperous year in 1920-1921. The Minister stated that a reason for the deficiency was that the department was charging low rates. The hon. member for Murilla controverted the Minister's statement in connection with that matter, and perhaps the hon. member knew more about the long distance carriage of goods than he (Mr. Green) did. But, on looking at the Commissioner's report, he found that in the majority of cases Queensland did not show to advantage in that respect compared with other States in Australia. Although the department had received a greatly increased revenue, in spite of the economy which they had been told had been effected, they had not made any advance towards catching up to the drift that had taken place in connection with the Railway Department during the last four of five years. It was the duty of the Committee to look at some of the reasons for the increased cost and to see how true economy could be carried out. In another speech he had stated that true economy did not always consist of dispensing with the services of employees, and he still held that view. True economy generally consisted in having an efficient service, an efficient plant, and in having efficient rolling-stock, and that, to a large extent, was where the railways were wanting at the present time. On page 29 of his report, the Commissioner for Railways said—

“Owing to the increased wages and cost of fuel, it is not profitable to run low-powered and obsolete engines over lines capable of carrying heavier engines, consequently any new engines built will tend to more economical working in the future.”

The large cost of running the railway system of the State was due to the condition of the rolling-stock at the present time. In the North trains often were late because of breakdowns. That meant overtime had to be paid, and it also meant that they were not getting an efficient service from the rolling-stock. It would pay the State handsomely to see that the rolling-stock was put into an efficient state.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have a very large number of engines under order now.

Mr. GREEN: After incurring a deficit of £6,500,000, they found it was necessary to

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buy new engines in order that they should be in a position to work the railways efficiently.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They have been on order a long time. We could not get the material.

Mr. GREEN: If the railway workshops were brought into an efficient state, men could be employed profitably in the construction of engines and in bringing the whole railway plant into good condition. At one period the Northern Railway was the most payable railway in the whole of Australia, but now it was getting into the same position as a majority of other lines in the State. It was not now a payable proposition, and, from all appearances, it was not likely to be so. There was a tremendous expenditure on coal, and, if the Bowen Coal-fields Railway had been pushed on and completed as it should have been twelve months ago, there would have been a saving of £43,000 in freight on coal alone, and, in addition, that line would have become a payable proposition, and the coal would have been available to other industries in Northern Queensland. Probably the Secretary for Railways would say that he could not push on with the construction of that railway because he had not the money, and because a certain delegation prevented the Government from getting it. He would point out, however, that the Government last year spent more money than had ever been spent in one year previously. They spent almost £21,000,000 from consolidated revenue, Trust Funds, and Loan Funds.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in pursuing that line of argument. He must deal with the administration of the department.

Mr. GREEN: He was showing that a saving could have been effected by cutting out shipping freights on coal.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Cabinet decided on that policy this morning.

Mr. GREEN: He was pleased to have that information, and he hoped the Government would complete the North Coast Railway very quickly, and also the connection with Proserpine. The Minister, also, as a further excuse for the large deficit, advocated that the railways should be free, and the hon. member for Leichhardt also said he was strongly in favour of free railways. Free railways was a pure fallacy, as there was nothing free in this world. For everything they got they had to pay in some way, and to say that they should have free railways was an absolute absurdity. Someone would have to pay for it. The statement that education was free was also an absurdity, as someone had to pay for it. Members of the Government would no doubt say that the cost would be borne by the few, but they could not put the expenditure on to the few. The burden would ultimately rest on every individual, whether he was a worker or not. If the amount earned by the Railway Department was taken from the consolidated revenue, how were they going to make it up? The revenue could only be maintained by additional taxation, and that additional taxation would fall upon a certain section of the community, and that section would naturally pass it on to the others. Eventually the burden would be borne by all, and perhaps would unjustly press on the shoulders of

those who did not require the railways. At the present time, they took that out of a total of 23,839 persons who paid land tax; 16,653 were on country land, and, if the railways were made free, it would mean that those persons would be asked to carry an additional burden in order to provide free railways for other people in the State. Of those who paid income tax, 38 per cent. were farmers and pastoralists who were engaged in developing the backblocks, and they, also, would have to pay additional taxation in order to provide free railways. They were the very ones who could not pass the tax on to others. They were the ones who were penalised over and over again, while those in the cities who would have to pay an extra amount would naturally pass the tax on. So they would find that at least 80 per cent. of the amount that would be required from direct taxation to maintain the railways would ultimately have to be borne by the working men of the State. Yet they had men talking such absolute drivel as "free railways."

They owed much to their industries with respect to the freights paid to their railways. An hon. member on the Opposition side had been attacked for having had something to do with the establishment of the Darra Cement Works. The Secretary for Railways, or anyone else connected with the railways, should be the last to attack any man for having had anything to do with the establishment of such works. Besides assisting the railway revenue, they had been of untold benefit to the local authorities and the Government in carrying out their works, and, without them, great unemployment would have resulted from the shortage of cement. He had gone to the trouble of finding out that the railway freight paid by the company was as follows:—

From Oct., 1915 to July, 1916 ...	£2,273
From July, 1916 to July, 1917 ...	£3,696
From July, 1917 to June, 1918 ...	£8,413
From July, 1918 to June, 1919 ...	£9,063
From July, 1919 to June, 1920 ...	£14,812
From July, 1920 to June, 1921 ...	£20,596

From 1918 to 1921 they also paid in freight on coal, which was included, of course, in the contractors' price, £7,380. So that the works had been a benefit to the State in every respect, and, instead of trying to detract from the credit due to the hon. member for Oxley, they should commend him as a benefactor, and be grateful that they had such broad-minded, businesslike man to help the prosperity of the State.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Farwick*): The Minister, in introducing the vote, remarked that a surplus was not necessarily a virtue and a deficiency was not necessarily a vice, and he followed that up with the statement that, after all, they depended upon circumstances and upon the policy followed. It would be as well to know from the Minister, or some other authoritative person on the Ministerial side, just what the policy had been or was intended to be. There was ample proof that it had not been of a constructive but rather of a destructive nature. If the latter was intended, no doubt very great success had attended the efforts of the party in power. The hon. gentleman at another stage of his speech said that members on the Opposition side had not proved that the management of the railways was unsatisfactory; but he proposed to show that

his own argument was a direct and forcible condemnation of the present administration of the railways. In order to prove how satisfactory was the administration of the railways, the hon. gentleman stated that, whilst the number of employees in 1920 was 16,283 in 1921 it was only 15,899—a decrease of 924—and in order to show that they did more work than their predecessors in 1920, he said that the train miles in 1920 numbered 10,433,619, and in 1921 10,755,723, or an increase of 292,104. He said that the figures were simply astounding, and seemed to call upon members on the Opposition side to join in his astonishment. They were not astonished, but they were surprised that any hon. member should ask the country to believe that that kind of thing was proof that the administration of the railways had been wise and strong. The statement of the Minister was, in fact, a shocking commentary on the mismanagement of the railways. Just imagine the Railway Department having to wait six years to realise that there were too many men in it and that they were not doing too much work!

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Who said so?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Minister for Railways himself said so. He made use of the argument in another direction. He was making use of it in the only true direction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You forget just one fundamental point—that they are not working full time now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman was trying to sidetrack his argument. He (Mr. Barnes) was dealing with the position as at the end of June last, whereas the Minister, by his interjection, was dealing with the position as at the present time, which was altogether a different matter. They knew that certain economies had recently been effected and a big endeavour made to put things on a better basis; but the Minister had simply proved the administration of the present Government had been bad and fatal to the good of the community, and that it had taken them six years to realise that very obvious fact. He was delighted to hear what had been said the other night by the hon. member for Bremer on the matter of apprenticeship. He hoped the Government would take notice of what had been said from that side of the Chamber. Again and again they had realised what it meant that the youths of their land were debarred from finding employment as skilled workers. There were many men to-day who had lost [2.30 p.m.] the opportunity of becoming craftsmen or tradesmen. Those opportunities had gone by simply because of the conditions fostered by the Government of the day. Those men had not had an opportunity of learning the trades they should have learned. The whole thing had been a failure, and it was to be hoped that in caucus and in the quiet of the Cabinet room Ministers would read and re-read the way in which they been castigated by the hon. member for Bremer. An apprentice started work to-day in the Ipswich railway workshops at £1 5s. 6d. per week. No apprentice was worth that amount to start with. Just imagine the wear and tear on the part of the superiors in order to make that youth fit for the work he was doing! No apprentice in such a sphere of life at the age of sixteen years could possibly be worth

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

£1 5s. 6d. The wages during the whole period of apprenticeship were—

	£	s.	d.
First year	1	5	6
Second year	1	9	6
Third year	1	18	0
Fourth year	2	10	6
Fifth year	3	12	6

In other words, at the time he finished his apprenticeship he succeeded in obtaining a wage where probably his father had to leave off. It was perfectly impossible to run a concern economically and satisfactorily under conditions of that kind. The whole award system in connection with the railways was working ill for the country. A lad entering the clerical division commenced at £70 per annum. With the training that a boy had to receive he was not worth that salary to commence with.

Mr. DUNSTAN: What would the boy say you were worth?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He started in life earning 6s. a week. He thought it was sufficient, and probably it was sufficient under the conditions under which he lived; and he supposed that many men started with a great deal less than that. The railways were not a paying concern because the Government had allowed the management to pass from their hands into the hands of the unions, which at every turn had fostered high awards, and amounts were being paid to youths which they could never return to the community. A lad porter was more likely to earn the amount given to him than a young clerk or a lad learning a trade in the Ipswich railway workshops. A lad porter's wages commencing at fifteen years of age were—

	£	s.	d.
First year	1	2	6
Second year	1	3	6
Third year	1	16	6
Fourth year	2	2	6
Fifth year	2	8	6
... Sixth year	2	14	6
Seventh year	3	0	6

and 14s. 4d. per day on attaining the age of twenty-one years. He would say distinctly and clearly that the railways could not stand that charge; it was altogether excessive. They might get an occasional lad who would earn it, but the bulk of the young fellows could not give a return of 14s. 4d. per day to the department. There was no special report in the Commissioner's report or in the Auditor-General's report dealing with the Ipswich workshops. He thought that it should be treated as a private enterprise. Why had it not been treated as a separate unit? There was no man in the land who could give any information whatever as to whether the Ipswich workshops were a paying concern or not. The chances were that, because the great bulk of the money was charged to the Loan Fund, everyone was content to remain in ignorance; but he objected to the Loan Fund being increased year by year by the excessive losses that must be made at the Ipswich workshops. The Committee should insist on a separate balance-sheet and report being submitted in connection with the work carried out there. When he was at the workshops last there were 1,500 or 1,600 men employed, and yet the Committee had to remain in complete ignorance as to whether the shops were paying or not. The Commis-

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.

sioner, in his report, made some slight references to the shops.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The cost of railway engines turned out there compares favourably with the cost of locomotives turned out by other workshops.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: That should be mentioned in the report.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are reflecting upon the Commissioner now.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He was reflecting on the Administration of the present day and of other days. They should bring about a condition of things that would enable the country to know the conditions that existed.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Why did you not ask for that when your party were in power?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We are following the policy that your Government adopted.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman was perpetuating it. In these days of absolute economy when the present Government were running on to the rocks and their administration was bad, surely they could have given some consideration to a matter of that kind. He would like to take the Minister to task in connection with railway freights. He understood the hon. gentleman to say that in Victoria the freights on agricultural produce and butter had increased 18 per cent., and there had been practically no increase in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For this financial year.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He declined to deal with that period. The Committee was not dealing with the present year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I was dealing with last year. Do not misrepresent me.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. gentleman was dealing with the Estimates for last year.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You go back twenty years sometimes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I made a comparison for a period of five years, and then made a supplementary reference to the increase in Victoria in January last.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: This was what the hon. gentleman said—

“Take South Australia, under Tory Administration. An article in the ‘Daily Mail’ of 27th 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 18 per cent. Was it not better to have a slight deficiency in Queensland?”

The hon. gentleman was dealing with the past, and not with the current year. He was going to show that, whilst the Minister appeared to be sad at heart on account of what was being done in Victoria, through the imposition of an 18 per cent. increase, his own Government had increased railway freights. They had increased the freight on maize for a short distance by 200 per cent., and he would give the respective increases for other distances.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For what period?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: From 1915, when the Government took office, to the end of last year. There was not a particle of sincerity in the hon. gentleman's statement of sympathy with the farmers, and his eulogy of the Queensland Government as compared with that of Victoria.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Do you advocate the increase of fares and freights?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He was dealing with the Minister's expression of sympathy with the agriculturists. If he had time, he would show that there was no one who had been treated so unfairly as that section of the community. The Government might give every consideration in regard to railway fares in the city and suburbs, but they had not considered the man in the country. The following table showed the old and new rates of freight on maize and wheat:—

Miles.	Maize—	Maize—	Wheat—	Wheat—
	Old Rate.	New Rate.	Old Rate.	New Rate.
	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
1 to 10 ...	1 6	4 6	1 6	3 3
„ 15 ...	1 9	5 2	1 9	3 6
„ 20 ...	2 2	5 9	2 2	3 9
„ 25 ...	2 7	6 5	2 7	4 1
„ 30 ...	3 1	7 0	3 1	4 4
„ 35 ...	3 6	7 7	3 6	4 7
„ 40 ...	3 11	8 4	3 11	4 10
„ 45 ...	4 4	9 3	4 4	5 4
„ 50 ...	4 10	9 11	4 10	5 11
„ 55 ...	5 3	10 6	5 3	6 3

There was another direction in which the consumer in the country was affected. The mineral class rates had been increased as follows:—Class M, from 12s. 6d. to 14s. 4d., or equal to 9 per cent.; class A, from 18s. 8d. to £1 2s. 1d., or 10 per cent.; class B, from £1 13s. 3d. to £2 0s. 4d., or 20 per cent.; merchandise—class 1, from £2 13s. 1d. to £3 3s. 10d., or an increase of 20 per cent.; class 2, from £3 19s. 7d. to £4 15s. 4d., or 17½ per cent.; class 3, from £5 9s. 5d. to £6 10s. 7d., or an increase of 20 per cent.

The men to whom he was going to refer now were those who took up a certain class of work in their hour of need—woodcutters. A lot of people turned their attention to getting a truck of wood when times were bad and sending it into the town. How had the department treated them? The old rate for a large eight-wheeled wagon for 10 miles was 3s. 3d., and it had been increased, with a terminal charge of 1s. 6d., to 18s., or 135 per cent. The Government were attacking the very man who wanted a helping hand. For 20 miles the old rate was 11s. 11d., and the new rate, with a terminal charge of 1s. 6d., brought it up to 19s. 4d.—in other words, a slight increase of 60 per cent. It was not fair to pick out certain individuals and impose an excessive increase like that. The charge might not be too great—there were many charges which might be too low—but to single out men who had to do hard work in the hour of extremity was not fair. That was all by way of preface to what he wished to say.

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

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): Anyone who took an interest in railway matters must have been surprised at the attitude of the Minister in trying to build up a case in support of the present administration of the department, when he was responsible for bringing it into the peculiar financial position which now existed. He had no hesitation in saying that

the maladministration in the department was due to political control. He was not going to boost the Commissioner up, but he would give him the credit which was due to him. If they were to give their opinion of the present Commissioner, they would very probably find that he would be relieved of his job before very long, so they were not going to attack him by supporting him. (Government laughter.) They were fortunate in having a man like the present Commissioner, and he hoped that the time was not far distant when an altered policy of railway management would permit of the business control of the department free from political influence. That will come only with a change of Government.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the State Advances Corporation? You did not use that argument in connection with the Commissioner of the Savings Bank.

Mr. CORSER: The Government put an Under Secretary from the Treasury in that position—an officer who generally held a pretty tight grip on the finances.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You objected to the principle of his being above the control of Parliament.

Mr. CORSER: He had objected to the principle of a man being taken from the Treasury Department, of all departments in the State, and placed at the head of an Advances to Settlers Bank.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Didn't your party ask me to exercise political influence in reference to gatehouses?

Mr. CORSER: No. He challenged the Minister to read the letter that he had received from the Country party.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will read it.

Mr. CORSER: He hoped the Minister would. He would see that it was a protest from the party against the administration of the Railway Department, which all the time appeared to be directed towards inflicting hardship upon country people. There were gatehouses in their country districts that the Minister was deciding to close.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not the Minister at all.

Mr. CORSER: The gatehouses were to be closed, inconveniencing country people and taking away the only public servant most country people had.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did you not go to the Commissioner?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman could not say that he (Mr. Corser) had seen him in regard to the matter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your party did.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman admitted that he (Mr. Corser) had not done so. It seriously affected his district, and he went to the Commissioner, with the result that it was found that those gatehouses were producing an amount of revenue.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Did any of your party go to the Minister?

Mr. CORSER: The letter which the Minister received protesting against the policy of the Government was sent by the leader of the Opposition on behalf of the party, complaining of the policy of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It went further; it asked for reconsideration.

Mr. Corser.]

Mr. CORSER: It complained of the policy of the department, which appeared always to be to inflict hardship upon country people to the advantage of those living in the city. The Minister had made some statements that required attention, and it was just as well that they should be given a little attention. In a general statement, the hon. gentleman referred to a table of increases in the railway charges in the various States. He endeavoured to make it clear that he was referring to the increased charges which had been put upon the people in the various States, and it would almost go to show that Queensland was charging an increase of only 44 per cent., whilst other States were up to 70 per cent. and 80 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Average increases.

At 2.54 p.m.,

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*), one of the panel of Temporary Chairmen, relieved the Chairman in the chair.

Mr. CORSER: They were the average increases in railway revenue. The hon. gentleman read them as though he were referring to the increase in the cost of transport over the railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I had two statements there.

Mr. CORSER: When they analysed the statement, they found that the Minister had taken certain increases in certain States and set them against certain increases in Queensland. If they went back to 1914-15—which was the first year of this Government's administration—and compared it with 1920-21, they would find that in 1914-15 the tonnage in respect of all agricultural produce was greater than it had been last year, while in 1920-21 the receipts were considerably more, the increase in freights shown being actually 60 per cent. on these commodities alone. The Minister had made general statements, but had not told them where to find the figures or how he had compiled them.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were obtained from the Commissioner.

Mr. CORSER: They were not in the Commissioner's report. The inference the Minister wished them to take—that Queensland had not increased its freights and fares—was not a fact. Three times during the present Government's tenure of office the freights and

fares had been increased. In 1913-14, the agricultural produce carried amounted to 850,738 tons for a revenue of £244,890, or 5s. per ton. In 1914-15, 876,621 tons were carried for a revenue of £264,036, or 6s. per ton. In 1919-20, they had only 754,164 tons carried, for a revenue of £349,669, or 9s. 3½d. per ton.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are not proving anything by that. What about the distances?

Mr. CORSER: These figures were at the rate per ton, and they were the same figures as were used by the Commissioner. In 1920-21, they had 843,925 tons carried for a total revenue of £421,912, or 10s per ton. That was an increase on agricultural produce alone, during the regime of the present Government, of 60 per cent. The figures he had quoted for 1913-14 and 1914-15, would be found on page 9 of the Commissioner's report for 1914-15; and the other figures would be found at page 26 of the report of the Commissioner tabled a few [3 p.m.] days ago. Those pages showed that on agricultural produce alone, during the present Government's term of office, they had increased freights by 60 per cent.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Nothing of the sort.

Mr. CORSER: That was the Commissioner's own compilation. Between 1914-15 and 1920-21 there was a decrease of 32,696 tons, and an increase in revenue of £157,876—4 per cent. less tonnage, and an increase of 60 per cent. all round in produce charges. In regard to live stock—another essential in this country—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have the lowest freights in Australia.

Mr. CORSER: There had been a higher increase in freights than in any country in the world. No country had dared to put on stock the increase after increase that the present Government had placed on it, and placed on it because they had a "set" against the men who were raising stock, and who were supposed to have been doing well during the last year or two—the so-called beef barons—who, the Government were pleased to know, were down at the present time. During a time of plenty with them the Government increased freights on every possible opportunity, as the following table, giving the numbers of live stock carried, would show:—

LIVE STOCK.

	Horses.	Cattle.	Sheep.	Pigs.	Revenue from Live Stock.	Revenue from Wool.
1914-15 ...	79,226	831,758	2,900,070	225,589	£ 535,880	£ 272,028
1920-21 ...	57,596	660,475	1,663,750	175,393	715,141	389,270

That table showed that there was a decrease of 21,630 in the number of horses, a decrease of 162,283 in the number of cattle, a decrease of 1,237,320 in the number of sheep, a decrease of 150,196 in the number of pigs carried, and an increase of £179,261 in the freight charged on those stock. In 1914-15, the amount of wool carried totalled 77,854 tons; and in 1920-21, the amount carried was 66,147 tons, or 11,707 tons less; and yet there was a tremendous increase in the amount of revenue received for the carriage of that commodity.

[*Mr. Corser.*

In regard to maize, the increase in freight had been 200 per cent. for short distances, and it was the short distances that affected the small man most. The Premier the other day deceived the Committee by quoting the lowest figures in Queensland as against the other States, and took, in support of his argument, special freights to the nearest port and compared them with the general freights on railways in the other States, and tried to show how favourable the Queensland freights were as compared to the other States. He

(Mr. Corser) protested against the administration of the Government in not completing railways that were under construction. The State owed a duty to the settlers in the Proston district. They had no freights and fares at all there, although they settled in that district on the distinct understanding that a railway would be built. A Labour Minister went there five years ago and turned the first sod. The railway was started five months afterwards, but those people were still waiting for the railway, and if the Minister, now that money was available, was not going to build such railways as that, then the sooner the Government got out the better.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It will have very careful consideration.

Mr. CORSER: Other railways were passed in 1914 that received careful consideration, and eight of them had not been started yet. A predecessor of the Minister claimed that there were 3,400 more men employed in the Railway Department—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. CORSER: The statement appeared in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Will you produce it?

Mr. CORSER: Will you deny that he made that statement?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member must address his remarks to the Chair.

Mr. CORSER: When the Government went to the country they said that there would be no retrenchment—that there would be no need for retrenchment. But what had happened? It would be news to many to learn that they had retrenched some 900 or more in the Railway Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not at all.

Mr. CORSER: On the Minister's own figures they had retrenched 924.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That included resignations and deaths.

Mr. CORSER: Some of them were asked to resign; and in other departments some of the employees were asked to resign, although they had not reached sixty years of age, and the Government were compelling them to resign.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Mention one!

Mr. CORSER: The staff clerk in the Education Department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Ask the Secretary for Public Instruction about that.

Mr. CORSER: If the Minister was satisfied that the railways were being run economically and in a businesslike way, he would never satisfy the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You should not ask for political interference.

Mr. CORSER: They did not. They had a right to ask the Minister to do certain things for country districts. That was all that was done.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You should go to the Commissioner.

Mr. CORSER: They had been to the Commissioner, and it was their right to write to the Minister.

Mr. MORGAN (*Marilla*): He would like to make a special appeal on behalf of the cattle-raisers of Queensland. Figures supplied in reply to questions showed that the cattle conveyed on the Queensland railways during the last six years were—

"Year ending 30th June—"			
1914	...	...	646,924
1915	...	...	834,711
1918	...	...	730,396
1919	...	...	552,422
1920	...	...	641,927
1921	...	...	669,475

On a previous occasion he had quoted figures to show that the freights on cattle had increased by 63 per cent. since 1914; and now that the industry was down and out and cattle were selling more cheaply than in 1914, the Government should take off that 63 per cent. and allow them to rail their cattle at the freights in existence prior to 1914. The Minister, and, he believed, the Government generally, must realise that there had to be a reduction in overhead charges. If the Government could not take off 63 per cent., let them take off 50 per cent., or 25 per cent., or 30 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If you can get the shipping companies to agree to a reduction, the matter will be placed before the Cabinet.

Mr. MORGAN: If the Government would agree to a reduction, it would be a strong lever with which to go to the shipping people. Out of 12,000,000 cattle in Australia, Queensland owned more than 6,000,000. In fact, omitting the dairy stock, Queensland owned practically two-thirds of the beef cattle in Australia. There was a big movement to get the Imperial Government to impose a duty of 1d. per lb. on all meat imported from other than British countries. Thousands of workers were out of employment in Queensland, and everything would help. If they went to the shipping people under present conditions, they would say, "Why, your own Government have put up the freights 63 per cent. since 1914. Do they expect us to assist you when they will not?" Let their own Government take the lead.

He had ascertained that cattle travelling 800 miles in a "K" wagon, taking them at an average of 600 lb. frozen weight each, paid £1 14s. 6d. per head, or 9/16d. per lb. in freight to the railways, and over 300 miles, 18s. per head, or 3d. per lb. He thought the Government would admit that that was excessive under present conditions. He quite agreed that, when cattle were bringing £21 per head, it was not excessive; but the late Secretary for Railways once stated that, if the railways were properly dealt with, the farmers, when they were getting £30 per ton for lucerne chaff, should be able to pay a higher freight on their railways, and that, when prices came down, the railways should get a lower freight. He rather believed in that principle. He believed in applying it to the workers generally in industry, so that, as the prosperity of industries increased, their wages would increase.

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

Mr. Morgan.]

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): When the recent loan was obtained, Northern members were naturally very anxious indeed to ascertain what prospects there were of a renewal of railway activity in the North, and, as a member in whose electorate portion of a line was being constructed, he asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Now that money is available, is it the intention to at once resume construction work on the North Coast Railway between Mackay and Proserpine?”

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. SWAYNE: It was a matter affecting the policy of the department, and he had always noticed that, when the chief vote for a department was being discussed, a certain amount of latitude was allowed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must keep to the vote under discussion.

Mr. SWAYNE: He thought the Commissioner came under the vote under discussion, and he referred in his report to the construction works. He merely wanted to refer to the reply the Minister gave to his question.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member continues I shall have to ask him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. SWAYNE: All right. He would wait till he got a chance on another vote. All he wanted to point out was that he was told that other members had moved in the matter. The other members the Minister referred to—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I call upon the hon. member to discontinue his speech.

Hon. W. H. BARNES and other MEMBERS rising,

The CHAIRMAN: Hon. W. H. Barnes.

Mr. SWAYNE: I wish to refer to other matters besides that.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Hon. W. H. Barnes.

Mr. SWAYNE: All the time I have been in the House I have seen nothing like this.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): I beg to move—That the Temporary Chairman's ruling be disagreed with. It seemed to him that this was an instance of high-handedness that they had never before seen or known in that Chamber.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must state, in writing, his motion for disagreement with my ruling. I would point out that any hon. member who refuses to obey my call to order, when dealing with the question under discussion, will be dealt with in a similar manner while I am in the chair.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. member for Mirani, in the first instance, was not clear as to what the Temporary Chairman had said.

The HOME SECRETARY: He said, before he sat down, that he would deal with it on the proper vote.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

[*Mr. Swayne.*

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The hon. member for Mirani may have got off the track to an infinitesimal extent, but he obeyed the Chairman's ruling. It seemed to the Committee that the Temporary Chairman was manifestly unfair in calling on him to discontinue his speech.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): On the point of order raised by the hon. member for Warwick, he wished to point out that this morning, when dealing with a similar matter to that which was being dealt with by the hon. member for Mirani, he was ruled out of order.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member for Bowen was not made to sit down.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I would like to point out that I have not given any ruling in this matter. I merely exercised my right as Temporary Chairman to ask the hon. member to discontinue his speech when he refused to keep to the question under discussion. Any hon. member may take another method of having the hon. member for Mirani further heard. In the meantime my instructions to the hon. member stand.

Mr. MORGAN (*Jurilla*): The hon. member for Mirani suffers very much from deafness, and probably did not hear you.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! Order! I would point out to hon. members that it is becoming rather frequent for hon. members, when they are called to order and asked to keep to the vote under discussion, to persist in their endeavour to get in any material they have at hand, whether it is relevant or not, and I simply dealt with the the hon. member for Mirani to show other hon. members that they cannot continue to disregard my call to order. The hon. member for Mirani knew that he was not in order, because, before he resumed his seat, he said, “Very well, I will take the opportunity of discussing it on another vote,” showing distinctly that the hon. member knew he was out of order all the time.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I move—That the hon. member for Mirani be further heard.

Question—That the hon. member for Mirani be further heard (*Mr. Taylor's motion*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

In division,—

Mr. VOWLES: I claim the vote of the hon. member for Mitchell, as he crossed the floor while the question was being put.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I ask the hon. member for Mitchell which side of the bar he was on when the question was put.

Mr. PAYNE: I could not tell you, Mr. Pollock.

Mr. HARTLEY: He was on this side.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No, he was on this side.

After a pause,

Mr. VOWLES: I claim the vote of the hon. member for Mitchell.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: He was on this side when the question was put.

Mr. PAYNE: I was on this side when the question was put.

AYES, 31.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Jones
" Barnes, G. P.	" Kerr
" Barnes, W. H.	" King
" Bebbington	" Maxwell
" Bell	" McCormack
" Brand	" Moore
" Clayton	" Morgan
" Corser	" Petrie
" Costello	" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Coyne	" Roberts, T. R.
" Deacon	" Swayne
" Dunstan	" Taylor
" Edwards	" Vowles
" Fletcher	" Walker
" Fry	" Wellington
" Green	

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Green.
NOES, 32.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Hartley
" Bertram	" Huxham
" Brennan	" Kirwan
" Bulcock	" Land
" Collins	" Larcombe
" Conroy	" Mullan
" Cooper, F. A.	" Payne
" Cooper, W.	" Pease
" Dash	" Riordan
" Ferricks	" Ryan
" Fihelly	" Smith
" Foley	" Stopford
" Forde	" Theodore
" Gilday	" Weir
" Gillies	" Wilson
" Gledson	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. F. A. Cooper and Mr. Dash.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The Standing Orders allowed hon. members three opportunities of speaking—one of fifteen minutes and two of five minutes each. He claimed that the Temporary Chairman's ruling only applied to his first period of fifteen minutes.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be allowed to speak for the other two periods of five minutes.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): The Committee had negated a motion to the effect that the hon. member for Mirani be further heard. He did not see how, in the face of the division, that the hon. member could now be further heard.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The question was that the hon. member should be no further heard during the first period of fifteen minutes, but he can speak for the remaining two periods of five minutes.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I withdraw my objection if that is so.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The Minister, when dealing with that Estimate, was very emphatic about certain matters which came in, not only under this Government's regime, but under the regime of previous Governments. One of the matters to which the hon. gentleman made reference was that previous Governments were responsible for deficits in connection with the railways of £8,000,000 odd. He would not be in order in reading the comment of the hon. gentleman, but it would be found on page 1398 of "Hansard" for this session. The hon. gentleman wanted to brush away the deficit of £6,500,000 which had accumulated in the last six years of the administration of his party. Granting, for the purposes of argument, that the hon. gentleman's figures were correct, and that during the

history of Queensland prior to the advent of this Government there were accumulated deficits of £8,000,000, if this Government had been in office all the time the State had been in existence, instead of the deficit being £8,000,000, it would have been more like £50,000,000 or £60,000,000. The Minister tried to hoodwink, not only the Opposition, but the general public, by stating that the Labour Government were only responsible for deficits of £6,500,000. He feared that, if the Government had another six years' tenure of office, it was likely that the deficit would be £20,000,000. The forces behind the Government were always driving the Minister. It was not many years since a delegation of Ministers went to Turbot street to receive their instructions.

Mr. HARTLEY: You have not to go so far; you only go to the Queensland Club.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Government had got the railways into a mess. They professed to be the friends of the farmer, but he wanted to show whether they were the friends of the farmer. Take the ordinary trading in connection with produce businesses. A firm by the name of Burrell, Fenton, and Company had certain goods to send away. A man bought a ton of stuff and wanted it sent to a station. Three different people bought from the same firm, and in each case the amount was under a ton. They were told in each case to consign it as 3 tons. The matter had been rectified, but not because the regulations provided for it. After a great deal of trouble it was rectified, and he had in his pocket a letter dealing with the subject, but he would not read it to the Committee. The Government were out "on the make," and bled the farmers.

He wanted to draw attention to the administration of the Railway Department in regard to the Mackay Railway. Did the Minister know that the only days in the week on which goods could be received for Mackay were Thursdays and Saturdays? Saturday was a day on which the department closed at 12 o'clock. The only two days on which goods could be received for that particular place, in competition with steamers, was Thursday and Saturday. Was that business-like management, and was it going to encourage traffic? A good deal of comment had been made during the debate with regard to railway extension. He was a believer in main trunk lines, because they were essential to the prosperity of the State. No one knew better than the Minister that the Government of which the hon. member for Albert and himself (Mr. Barnes) were members were responsible for the North Coast Railway. He agreed with the hon. member for Townsville that it was absolutely essential that these lines should be completed, as they were indispensable to the development of the State. It would be a mistake to restrict the building of railway lines, especially main lines. He was exceedingly sorry to find that the Minister, when debating the question of shrinkages, made it appear that all the trouble that had come upon himself as the administrator of the department had been due to the delegation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Partly.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He laid against the Minister the charge that the failure of the railways had been due to the fact that

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the men in charge of the railways had not had a free hand.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Didn't you interfere with the wages board award in Rockhampton?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman interjected in a highly improper way. The hon. gentleman knew that such was not the case.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is a fact. Didn't you suspend the award in 1912?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Was the Minister satisfied when he looked upon the failure of the railways to the extent of £6,600,000? Did he not think there was a screw loose somewhere?

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why did you interfere with that award in 1912?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The officers of the department, capable as they were, were not allowed to pursue the course they would like to pursue in connection with the department. The Minister knew that.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You interfered with that award in 1912—I know that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He believed that at the commencement of the financial year a budget should be prepared. The men ought to be willing to have their claims reviewed before the budget was prepared. He did not care whether it was a Government department or a public business, if they were going to throw upon the Minister or anybody else the responsibility of finding a sum of money he did not anticipate, it tended to dislocate the finances.

MR. HARTLEY: Who would review the wages?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Arbitration Court, for twelve months. There had been times when the Arbitration Court allowed awards to be reviewed only every twelve months. Surely it was a fair thing in connection with a big public service that the servants should be agreeable to an award for twelve months.

MR. HARTLEY: They are reviewed every twelve months now.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He recognised there were various branches of industry in the various departments. Those awards should be reviewed at a particular time to enable the Minister and those in charge of the departments to strike their budget for the twelve months.

MR. HARTLEY: You evidently want a double-barrelled Arbitration Court.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Was it not a fair thing to say that, if Queensland were to be put on a proper footing, the whole matter of expenditure, the revenue anticipated, and the various items which came up for consideration, should be looked at from a business point of view and dealt with accordingly?

MR. HARTLEY: Not on the lines you suggest.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not suggesting anything but business lines. The Nationalist party believed in and stood for arbitration. It would be easy for the Minister and his officers to have the matter brought up every twelve months, after consultation with the Court, and let Parliament know exactly where they were going.

MR. HARTLEY: That is practically what is done to-day, only the Arbitration Court fixes the award.

[Hon. W. H. Barnes.]

HON. W. H. BARNES: If the hon. gentleman looked at the statement made by the Treasurer or the remarks of the Auditor-General, he must admit that that was not precisely so—that, in the interval, amounts of money had had to be provided for. What was the position to-day with regard to the railways generally? Whether they wanted to discuss it or not, the facts were patent. They had an amount of £230,914. to meet an interest bill of £1,970,000 odd. Could any hon. member say that that was good business? He was prepared to admit that the Minister—probably with a view to getting nearer those conditions for which some people outside had been clamouring within the last week; with a view to placating someone—said, that the railways should be free for everybody.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I gave that as an ideal, not as an immediate possibility.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That was what they were aiming at in the near future—railways free for everybody.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They should be as free as education and main roads.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman in his speech said, "We have to tax the big institutions, the big property-owners"—those who, he thought, had a great deal of money.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They should pay their share.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Of course, the farmers would be included.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The farmers would be relieved; you know that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knew that that was a misstatement. This Government raised the fares and freights on the farmers.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You want to increase them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The railways were practically in a hopeless position, and in order to placate the people the Minister said, "Here is another sugar-coated pill; we can all go free on the railways." He used it as an argument, because members of Parliament travelled free. He (Mr. Barnes) unhesitatingly made the statement that every service had a right to pay for itself. He made another statement—that, if members of Parliament such as himself were the obstacles, that privilege should be withdrawn. If the Minister honestly believed that that was the position, he had a right to deal with it in a broad way and say that he was going to give them relief. The railways were in a deplorable condition. He did not care what the public outside might think, the fact remained that, unless they levelled them up in some way, they were faced with ruination.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You want to increase fares and freights.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman wanted to put into his mouth words he had never used.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Your leader said so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It should be done by having no political interference. He would make another suggestion. There was a gentleman who usually occupied the place which the Temporary Chairman was now occupying, who had said that, if he were put into the office of Secretary for Railways,

he would soon rectify the position. It would be a good scheme to transfer the hon. member from the chair to see if he could do so. That would be one way of dealing with the position, because the hon. member for Brisbane was a practical man, and had said that he could do it, and, that being so, they ought to give him the opportunity. The community had a right to ask the Government to face the position.

Another thing that struck him, on looking through the Commissioner's report, was the lavish way in which money had been spent, such as the amount paid to the Tramway Board. They were told that the Government were going to take over the tramways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have got a valuation, which enables us to check the valuation made by the company.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member had a valuation in return for a big sum of money paid to men in the city.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: And experts from the South.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That was as far as they had got. Railway and tramway development was not going on as it should, and he repeated what he had said dozens of times before—that the "hold up" was because the Government had lost the confidence of investors.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What about the American loan?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Even in his criticism the Minister had to go to New York, but he would remind him that, when it was proposed to establish meat works here, some of his party denounced them. As to the American loan, it would be well to know what the actual returns were before they criticised it one way or the other. The point was that the Government were absolutely "up against it."

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are trying to excuse the delegation. You cannot do it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member must dream delegation. He must have delegation porridge in the morning.

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The country could be developed only along the lines of confidence. Unless they had confidence and industries, they were not going to have successful railways.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: We have got confidence. We have that 12,000,000-dollar loan.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He would be very sorry to have that sort of confidence. It was a swollen-headed confidence which existed only in their own minds. Whatever money the Government may have got, Queensland unfortunately was not a place which invited or encouraged people to invest money in order to help the railways. Did the hon. member doubt that statement?

MR. HARTLEY: It is absolutely wrong.

HON. W. H. BARNES: At every turn a blockade was being made, and the railways had got into such a position that they harassed trade to an extent that few men in the Chamber realised, by their mismanagement—and mismanagement not of the men at the head. A man might get a con-

signment of 100 bags, and find that until ninety of them had been sold he could not take the balance away unless there was a ton. Because of the interference of the Minister, the railways were becoming very unpopular with private firms because of the things that were cropping up from day to day. If the Minister did not know of such things, he challenged him to find them out.

MR. SWAYNE (Mirani): Did the Secretary for Railways fully realise the meaning of the suggestion that the higher cost of running the railways should be defrayed from the general revenue? Of course, they all knew that at times the hon. member made very extravagant statements. He found that the number of taxpayers in Queensland was something like 26,000 and the total taxable income of Queensland was something over £12,000,000. Those taxpayers were to-day paying in income tax and land tax something like £3,000,000, and he thought the total charges for their railways, including interest on capital expenditure and maintenance, came to something like £7,000,000, so that, if the hon. member spoke advisedly—and he took it that a gentleman occupying his position had no right to speak without realising what he did say—his policy and the policy of his party was to confiscate £10,000,000 out of the £12,000,000 of Queensland's income. If he was really in earnest—and he had no right to speak unless he was—no worse advertisement could be made for Queensland than his speech. What an incentive to people to invest money in Queensland in mining or manufacturing to know that the Government intended to take away from them something like five-sixths of any income they might possibly derive from their investments! The Minister should [4 p.m.] make it clear whether that was what was intended. Most certainly that was the meaning at the present time as something like 26,000 people in Queensland were paying direct taxation.

THE TREASURER: You know you are talking nonsense.

MR. SWAYNE: About 26,000 people had to have a further impost placed on them of something like £7,000,000 per annum because of the condition in which the Minister and his predecessors had got the railways into. In five years there had been an increase of 41 per cent. in the earnings and an increase of 84 per cent. in the expenditure. The Government had said over and over again, "We cannot help it. Causes beyond our control have led to this." But there were several causes which were not beyond their control. How could they account for the increase of 33 per cent. in the number of employees, while there had been 1,400,000 less train mileage in 1919 than in 1915? In the first flush of victory, when the Government first took office, without looking ahead or realising the results of their action, they packed the department full of their political friends and bought votes with the people's money in that way.

THE TREASURER: What?

MR. SWAYNE: They had an admission from the Premier that the department was unduly inflated. It was no kindness to those who were given a helping hand at that time when they have had to be deflated, to use a current phrase, because they were in a worse position than they were in in the first place. They had an admission from the

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Premier that the department was overmanned. The hon. gentleman, in reply to a deputation in April of this year, was reported to have stated—

“The Premier asserted there had been no retrenchment, but the authorities had been reducing their excessive staff.”

Who had made them excessive? The hon. members opposite had been in office four or five years, and, if they were excessive, it was their fault entirely. The Premier, in reply to Mr. Rymer, the secretary of the Railway Union, was reported to have stated on the question of retrenchment—

“As a result of the Ipswich retrenchment the union, together with other unions, had waited on the Premier, who would not be convinced that the railways were not overstaffed, and stated, if the deputation argued until midnight, they would not alter his opinion. He had further stated that it was not economy to keep a surplus staff and work them short time, as privileges had to be paid to the surplus men, and this was a very big item.”

There they had another admission that the department was overstaffed. Surely they were justified in showing the position that the department was in? Other speakers had pointed out that they had gone back considerably over £1,000,000 a year since the Government took office, and the last deficit was bigger than any before. The position in the railways had been to a great extent brought about by the Government when they first took office placing possible supporters or friends in jobs in the Railway Department. The Secretary for Railways had quoted an extract from the Sydney “Bulletin.” He would also quote an extract from the same paper. It was as follows—

“Impassioned fervour is an asset and a help towards office, but it isn't a perfect substitute for knowledge and plodding industry. The favourite attitude of the young political lion, of the Fihelly or McTiernan brand, is that of Camille Desmoulins on the table in the Palais Royal garden, when the famous oath was taken—with a pale, intense expression, burning eyes, body sloped backwards, and a voice shouting, ‘On, on!’ or ‘Erwake, Erise,’ or ‘Forward, you have all to win and nothing to lose save your chains’—the last the cry of Tom Mann. But after five and a-half years of this, the Brisbane Engine Drivers, Firemen, and Cleaners' Association has complained that there is hardly a sound locomotive left, even about the city. The boilers almost all leak, and a common device is to put horsedung or sawdust into the water.”

What a climax to the fervour of the young men opposite—cowdung in the boilers!

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman has exhausted the time allowed him under the Standing Orders.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): The Minister had made no reference in his speech to the works at Mayne Junction, and he (Mr. Fry) failed to see any reference to them in the Commissioner's report. He thought the Minister should make some reference to them in view of the expenditure of an enormous amount of money upon that work. He would quote extracts from previous reports furnished by various Commissioners. The Minister should make a statement, more especially as the works were now in a state of dilapidation,

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and he (Mr. Fry) wanted to draw attention to what he considered neglect of duty in respect of those works. The amount of money expended was

	£
1912	63,080
1913	32,677
1914	30,753
1915	32,695
1916	52,862
1917	51,551
1918	40,236
1919	30,595
1920	25,765

Total £358,214

There was no reference in the report to the amount of expenditure in 1920-1921.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will deal with that on the Loan Vote.

Mr. FRY: In dealing with that matter various reports had been made. The Commissioner in 1914 reported—

“Progress has been steady.”

In 1915—

“It cannot be said that progress has been satisfactory, and it is hoped that, as additional accommodation is urgently needed in Brisbane, something will be done to expedite the work.”

In 1916 the Commissioner reported—

“In progress during the year.”

The same report was made for 1917. In 1919 the Commissioner reported—

“This work has not been vigorously carried out, it having been decided not to advance the scheme until after some of the largest layouts in America had been inspected.”

He would like to know why there had been no report, and, as such an enormous amount of money had been spent on the works which had been held up for the purpose of inspecting layouts in America, he would like to know how far the department had gone in that direction. It seems strange, after the expenditure of that amount of money, that it was necessary for the late Minister to go to America to find out how they did things there. The works were at a standstill, and were not being used for any purpose at all. They were an eyesore, and grass was growing up all round them. Anyone travelling along the line would come to the conclusion that things were not as they should be. He was bringing the matter before the notice of the Minister to enable the hon. gentleman to give some details concerning the work. It would have been wise if the Minister who went to America to inquire into railway management there had furnished a report. After paying a lot of money in sending that hon. gentleman abroad to inquire into the working of railways in other lands, they expected that he would have furnished a report, instead of making an announcement that he was going to contest the Herbert electorate. That was unsatisfactory to the Committee. He would like the present Secretary for Railways to tell the Committee something, because, in addition to the expenditure of £358,000, they had an interest bill of £20,000 to meet. That amount was going to waste, and there was a leakage in their railway control. It was a long stretch from 1912 to 1921 without anything definite being done, and he thought the matter should not go unattended to. There were many places on the railways where the money that had

been spent on the Mayne Junction works could very well have been expended. Whether the works were badly placed or were useless for the purpose for which they were intended, it seemed to him very bad business, and if it was possible to make use of those sheds he thought they should be finished and made use of, instead of the department going on with other works which probably were not so much needed. He would commend that matter to the consideration of the Minister.

His attention had been drawn to a complaint by the official organ of the Australian Railway Union, dated 10th October, 1921—

“Our production of lengthsmen’s shacks situated on our Queensland railroads should appeal to every member of Parliament who values the lives and happiness of human beings—there are hundreds of such shacks on the Queensland railways in which railway employees and Labour supporters exist—many of them have made sacrifices for the cause, which now denies them a decent covering. Once again we appeal for a chance in life for the fetters and their wives and kiddies, in the shape of human habitation and education worthy of the name of white Australia.”

There they had on one hand spent a lot of money on works with which they were doing nothing at all, except probably covering up the concrete foundations, whilst they had dilapidated buildings that required to be replaced. That was a matter which he thought he should place before the Minister, not with the idea of placing the hon. gentleman in a bad light, but to give him an opportunity of putting the position before the Committee. They were one and all interested in the welfare and progress of the State. If a little more consideration were given to these matters, it would be better for the Government. He did not think the Opposition had ever tried to take advantage of the Government from ulterior motives. They had endeavoured to help the Government. It was the duty of the Opposition to assist the Government; but the Government would not accept advice; consequently, they had the financial chaos in which the Government now found themselves.

Mr. JONES (*Kennedy*): He wished to say a few words before the vote went through. On the Northern line at Prairie there was a railway dip, and the charge for dipping cattle was 5d. per head. When they considered that private individuals could dip cattle for 3d. per head, that was something like rack-renting. Then again, at the end of the Northern line, at Dajarra, there was a bore, at which the department charged 3d. a head for watering stock. The men who suffered most under that charge were the teamsters, to whom it meant 10s. a day, or £3 a week, to water their few teams of horses. It was a very unjust charge, because they were often out of work. That was a matter which he would like the Minister to look into.

The only other matter to which he wished to refer at present was the charge for sleeping berths on the railways. The old charge was 12s. 6d., and, when they considered that a man only slept for two or three hours in the berth, it was a very fair charge. To-day the department were charging £1, which was too much, and he thought they should revert to the old charge. He had no great

fault to find with the railways. He thought they had improved lately, but they still travelled slowly. It took the train nine hours to go from Hughenden to Winton, a distance of 128 miles.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): He would like the Minister to give them an indication as to the amount of money which had been spent on the Willowburn works at Toowoomba. There had been a lot of money spent there, which, perhaps, would have been far better employed in remodelling many of the buildings in which lengthsmen and other railway employees had to live. That work stood to-day as a monument of stupidity; it was not completed, and required more expenditure to make it of service to the department. When they asked for the building of a platform or some slight improvements at some of the railway stations, they were frequently told that the department had no money to do the work. He hoped that before the vote went through the Minister would give them some information in regard to the work being carried out at Willowburn, and he further hoped that some use would be made of the work done there within a very short period. In his report the Commissioner referred to the loss which occurred on many of the country lines. He would like to know from the Minister the proportion of freight that came from the branch lines to the main lines. It seemed to him that there could not be a loss on some of the branch lines judging from the traffic which appeared to be carried. It was unfair to say that the country lines were a burden to the State. Country lines were essential for the country, and were going to be more so in the future. Alongside their railway policy they should have a land policy as well. The future construction of railways should be considered from the point of view of land settlement. He hoped that the Minister would give them information which would enable them to ascertain the losses which occurred on the country lines.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The hon. member for Pittsworth had referred to the Willowburn construction works at Toowoomba. Those works were necessary for the accommodation of the Railway Department at Toowoomba, and that within a certain area the houses had been removed to make way for the proposed engine-shed. The hon. member for Pittsworth did not know much about the welfare of Toowoomba. While he (Mr. Brennan) had represented Toowoomba, the people there had known that the work was being carried out.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You are only in Toowoomba about once a month.

Mr. BRENNAN: He (Mr. Brennan) was in Toowoomba weekly, but when down in Brisbane he was working for the welfare of the people of Toowoomba. The work being done at Willowburn was of a solid nature, and would be continued as soon as money was available.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss construction works on this vote; that will come under the Loan Estimates.

Mr. BRENNAN: With regard to railway matters, he would quote from the “Daily Mail Year Book” of 1921 to show that the railways of England were in a worse condition than the Queensland railways. Under

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the heading of "Balancing the Railway Bill" it was stated—

"The first serious attempt to restore equilibrium between railway revenue and heavily increased outgoings took effect on and from 15th January, when rates were increased between 25 per cent. and 100 per cent., according to different classes of traffic. For example, for coal, coke, and patent fuel the increase was 25 per cent.; for classes 1 to 5, the increase was 60 per cent.; and for small parcels the increase was 100 per cent. No increase was made in the charge for the carriage of fresh milk, or for the conveyance of manure, basic slag, or lime intended for agricultural purposes."

Then the report went on—

"The deficit arrived at is, despite the additional revenue of £10,000,000, derived from the increase of rates during eleven weeks of the period under review. But since the question of the revision of rates was referred to the Rates Advisory Committee in October, 1919, there has been an increase of expenditure of £43,750,000, arising from enhanced cost of materials, £12,000,000; extra cost of coal, £3,500,000; and higher wages to employees, £24,000,000."

That was in England—

"On 7th July the Rates Advisory Committee found there was a deficit accumulating at the rate of £54,500,000 for the United Kingdom for a full year's working. The committee was requested to frame recommendations with regard to a fresh interim revision of not only rates, but also fares and charges. The Ministry of Transport suggested that the loss already experienced might be picked up by carrying some portion of it into the next financial year and endeavouring to treat as one the period from 1st April, 1920, to 30th June, 1921, which would somewhat reduce the annual rate. The Government eventually decided to extend the period of recovery to the latest practicable date, viz., 31st July, 1921, when Government control ends. It was calculated that in order to produce the necessary sum within the dates available, it would be necessary to raise rates, fares, and charges to a level estimated to produce revenue in Great Britain at the rate of £72,000,000 per annum, with an addition of £3,900,000 for Ireland. After accepting the recommendation of the railway companies that the allocation of the increased revenue for the future should be from passenger revenue 40 per cent., and from freight revenue 60 per cent. of the whole, it was on this basis that the recommendations of the committee were made."

At 4.25 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BRENNAN: Then, on page 120, under the heading of "Railway Deficit," it was stated—

"In the whole year to 31st March, 1920, the State had to find a sum of £41,349,000 to finance the railways. The actual working involved an expenditure of £185,819,000, and the receipts were £193,407,000, giving a balance of £7,142,000 in hand, after allowing for revenue from minor services. The Go-

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vernment, however, had guaranteed the shareholders £48,950,000, which sum pays about 3 per cent. on the total capital, and had to find £41,349,000 of this amount. The Government also paid a sum of £18,264,000 for traffic carried on its account."

Those were figures that it was necessary to have in "Hansard" so that the people of Queensland could appreciate the position in regard to losses on the railways last year. The "Daily Mail Year Book" was treated as an authority in every part of the world, and it showed that the losses in England were greater in proportion than those in Australia.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The circumstances were altogether different.

At 4.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 306 and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 14th instant, I will now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress, and the Committee obtained leave to sit again at a later hour of the day.

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table, and ordered to be printed:—

Forty-fifth report of the Secretary for Public Instruction for the year 1920.

QUESTIONS.

REPORTS OF GENERAL MANAGER AND AUDITOR-GENERAL ON CENTRAL SUGAR MILLS AND ACCOUNTS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Treasurer—

"When will the following reports be available:—

1. Report of the General Manager of Central Mills?
2. Report of the Auditor-General upon the accounts of central sugar-mills indebted to the Government?"

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

"1. The report is in the hands of the Printer, and will be made available as early as possible.

"2. The Auditor-General informs me that he expects to table his report about the end of this week."

PREVENTION OF GAMBLING IN CITY LANES.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Will he take the necessary steps to prevent an undesirable class of people congregating in the lanes of the city for the purpose of conducting gambling business?"

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

"Prosecutions were instituted in May last against thirteen persons, and convictions obtained for betting in lanes of the city of Brisbane. Similar steps will again be taken when sufficient evidence is obtainable."

LICENSES UNDER INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT TO IMPROVERS.

Mr. NOTT (*Stanley*) asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“Will he furnish a return showing the following particulars, under the Industrial Arbitration Act of 1916, for the period of one year ending 30th June, 1921:—Licenses to improvers over the age of twenty-one years—

1. Number of all such applications made during the above period?
2. Number granted?
3. Number of applications made by unions concerned to have licenses cancelled?
4. Number of licenses so cancelled at request of unions concerned?”

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

“1. 275.

“2. 243.

“3. None. No unions have applied to have such licenses cancelled.

“4. See answer to No. 3.”

RAIL MOTOR EARNINGS BETWEEN WILLOWBURN AND WYREEMA.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

“1. What are the total earnings from 1st January to 30th June, 1921, of rail motor running between Willowburn and Wyreema?

“2. Expenditure, same period?

“3. The average number of workmen's weekly tickets issued in connection with same?

“4. The cost of workmen's weekly ticket?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*) replied—

“1. £668 6s. 10d., including the earnings of the train when motor-car was laid up.

“2. £948 7s.

“3. 112.

“4. Toowoomba and Willowburn, 1s. 3d. per week; Toowoomba and Harristown, 1s. 3d. per week; Toowoomba and Drayton, 2s. per week; Toowoomba and Wyreema, 4s. 6d. per week.”

ALLEGED ADVOCACY OF REPUDIATION OF INTEREST ON PUBLIC LOANS.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), without notice, asked the leader of the Opposition—

“Can he, as promised, give the House the Federal ‘Hansard’ reference in which he claimed that the hon. member for South Brisbane, while a member of the Senate in the Commonwealth Parliament, advocated repudiation of interest on public loans?”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*)—

“On division there were twenty-two votes cast—‘Noes,’ nineteen; ‘Ayes,’

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three. The three ‘Ayes’ were Senator Stewart, our present Attorney-General (Hon. J. Mullan), and the present member for South Brisbane (Mr. Ferricks).” (Laughter.)

Mr. FERRICKS: I would say the same thing to-morrow.

Mr. VOWLES: I would refer the House to Federal “Hansard,” vol. 79, page 7443. The discussion was on the War Loan Bill (No. 3), clause 2, in Committee. That clause provided—

“The Treasurer may, from time to time, under the provisions of the Commonwealth Inscribed Stock Act, 1911-1915, or under the provisions of any Act authorising the issue of Treasury bills, borrow moneys not exceeding, in the whole, the amount of £18,000,000.”

The following amendment to the clause was moved by Senator Stewart (Queensland):—

“That the following words be added:—“but, notwithstanding anything contained in the above-mentioned Commonwealth Inscribed Stock Act, 1911-1915, no interest shall be paid or payable on the sum or sums borrowed under the provisions of this Act.”

That attitude was supported by our present Attorney-General, who said—

“In supporting the amendment, I want to say I realise fully what it involves. After all, this would not be a loan, and it is just as well to disabuse our minds on that point, and that the public should know what we are out after. It will practically be a levy, because everybody knows, and nobody knows better than Senator Stewart, that if we were to issue a loan to which no interest were attached no one but the real patriots would apply for our bonds. Then, as the result of our failure to raise money in that way, it would be necessary to levy a wealth tax to that extent. I am quite prepared to subscribe to that doctrine.”

WATER AUTHORITIES ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): 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—ELEVENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

RAILWAYS.

GENERAL ESTABLISHMENT.

Question stated—“That £112,641 be granted for “Railways—General Establishment.”

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The State must have settlement, and they had to utilise

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the land along the existing railways. The more settlement they had, the less the taxation would be per head. Once the track was laid the railway was there for all time. In the near future he considered the branch and main lines would be profitable concerns. Along the line to Charleville there were beautiful Mitchell grass plains which were undeveloped and which would settle thousands of families. They were held now as big sheep walks. Reference had been made to the great scandal prevailing at Mayne Junction.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS conversing in a loud tone of voice—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members to conduct their conversation in a lower tone. They are disconcerting to the speaker; and, in view of the fact that the "Hansard" staff are working long hours, I ask hon. members to show some consideration for them.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. BRENNAN: The late Commissioner for Railways received an extension of his appointment in 1915 for three years, the understanding being that the railways were to get a pretty bad knock during that period, as shown by the fact that buildings were badly constructed, that there was defective workmanship, and that the heads of departments were to blame in respect of plans and specifications. Look at the unnecessary platforms between Toowoomba and Brisbane, and the overhead bridge beyond Gowrie Junction, which was never used, and the wasteful expenditure at Chinchilla. All the expense the Government could possibly be put to was deliberately incurred, because the Commissioner spent more money in those three years than in six years before it. The war was on, and hard times were likely to be ahead, yet he embarked on a bold policy of wasteful expenditure to put the Government in a bad position. There was no other interpretation to put upon it. There was no justification whatever for the alteration in administration which the late Commissioner made after the present Government came into power. The railway men should appreciate the way in which the Government had conducted the railways during a time of drought and war, for having gone so far as they did in order to keep them in their positions without reducing their wages. No party should stand for a reduction of wages. There was an article in the book he had quoted earlier which showed what such a reduction meant. Men must have a basic wage, and the idea of the basic wage came from the workers themselves; and the Federal Prime Minister appointed a Royal Commission to ascertain what the basic wage ought to be, but since then his political bosses had told him he had made a mistake, and their opponents now wanted to recall all the evidence which had been taken, and say that the figures were not reliable. The Railway Department was unfortunate in having a deficit, but the country had to put up with it, and no party could have done better than the present Government. They had learned all these things, and from now on the administration by the Government could be placed altogether on a practical basis. At Toowoomba the other day they had to put off certain men, but all of them, or a good number of them, had gone back to work

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elsewhere. The Government had to find the money, and they got no assistance from their friends on the other side, who, first of all, tried to block their loan in London, whereby they had to retrench, and then sent circulars through the country and to England, saying that the Government were trying to get money by backdoor methods.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not in order in discussing that question.

Mr. BRENNAN: The railways would be in a better position now that they had got the money from America, because all they needed to keep the railways going was money, and they would be able to get double the amount so soon as they went on the market again. He was sure that the railway men appreciated what they had done in spite of the opposition of their opponents.

Mr. CLAYTON (*Wide Bay*): He thanked the Premier for the opportunity he had given them of discussing the Railway Estimates, which last year they were prevented from debating. One hon. member on the Government side was game to criticise the Government for their administration of the railways: but it would be interesting to hear other hon. members make the statements in the Chamber that they had been making outside, and repeat the assertions they had made on the platform during the last election campaign.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: It was regrettable that they had had such a huge loss on their railways. In keeping with the other State enterprises, they were a losing concern, and had turned a surplus of £48,000 in 1915 into a debit balance for last year of £1,739,000. What would the position be if the Government remained in power much longer, and continued to conduct the railways and other State enterprises in the same way as they had done during the last six years? He was inclined to think that the Minister was an inexperienced man, without the experience necessary to enable him to administer the railways in the proper way. When he saw on the other side men who had had considerable experience in the working of their railways, he thought it would be much better if the administration were transferred to one of them. It would be much better also if they gave the Commissioner supreme control over the railways. If political control were taken away, it would be to the advantage of the railways themselves, of the employees, and of everyone concerned with them. They had the Commissioner doing all in his power to make the railways a paying concern; but it seemed immaterial to the Minister whether the railways paid or not. In his speech on Friday night last, the hon. gentleman said—

"Before he became a 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 utility rather than as a profit-making concern. . . . 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."

Land monopolists and Queen-street land-owners did not need to pay the extra taxation imposed on them. They had power to pass on any extra taxation imposed on them, and it was the man on the land and the working man who would be called upon to pay the extra taxation which would be imposed if the railways were continued as the Government were running them. If they gave the people free railways, the money had to come out of revenue. They heard hon. members on the other side quoting figures to show how few farmers paid taxation, and how few cane-growers paid taxation. Why did they not tell them how many paid taxation indirectly? But they liked to get into "Hansard" figures which were misleading. Considering the good seasons they had had, it was very strange to see that the railways had such a deficit. He did not know what the deficit would have been had they had a drought to contend with, such as other Governments had had, who had managed, in spite of bad times, to make the railways pay.

They found a reduction of train services going on throughout the country, which was not going to do good for the development of the country. If they increased train services, they would induce people to settle on the land. For his part, he would make available for selection all the good land that was adjacent to existing railways. The Government were borrowing money to build railways, but they were losing money on the railways they built. Why not spend the money on the land adjacent to the railways they had built? That, he thought, would go a long way towards making those lines a paying proposition.

Their rolling-stock was in a deplorable condition. When the Government took over the railways, the rolling-stock and everything connected with the railways was in a good condition.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. CLAYTON: And, when assets of that kind got right down, it was going to cost an enormous amount to bring them back into the fine state in which they had been before the Government took office. There was also a shortage of rolling-stock, and he did not think they had seen a pound of paint put on the carriages or anything in connection with the railways for years. The Chairman, as a practical man, knew what would happen to coaches and carriages if they were not painted; it would be useless to attempt to repair them at a later stage. Their locomotives were also in a deplorable state, so that—although he was not an engineer—he thought it would take an enormous amount more fuel to drive them than if they were in a good state of repair. They experienced delays through the breaking down of engines,

and he thought it was the duty [5 p.m.] of the Government to spend more money to put their rolling-stock in a good condition, instead of retrenching a lot of their men. He did not know whether he would be popular in saying that it was a scandalous state of

affairs that the Government had increased the salaries of the highly-paid officials of the Railway Department and had sacked men and women from those railways. The Government had done that, and were now pooling the work in the department. The railways to-day were seething with discontent owing to the actions of the Government in sacking men and pooling the work for those who were kept on. It was nothing short of a reduction in wages. When hon. members on that side of the Chamber mentioned anything in connection with wages, they were called the "low-wage party," yet they knew that hon. members opposite were a "no wage party." The Government had got into the present position because they had spent loan money extravagantly when they had it to spend. He was going to refer to the Tinana deviation. He did not know whether he would be in order in referring to a work connected with the place where the Chairman was from. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. gentleman will be in order in referring to that on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. CLAYTON: He had intended referring to the Proston line, but he had learned a little since the hon. member for Mirani had been treated so rightly—should he put it?

He was opposed to any increase in freights and fares. The man on the land was not in a position to stand any increase in freights now that the price of his produce was coming down. If the freights were increased, the man on the land would have to bear that increase. He hoped that the Government would not increase freights at the present time. If the freights were altered and the man on the land was able to stand it, he was fair and reasonable and would be prepared to carry the burden that would be imposed upon him. If the freight on coal could be lessened, it would be an inducement to develop the coal areas, and more coal would be carried on the railways. Where the coal industry was going to get a serious bump in Queensland and Australia was because of the likelihood of big liners using oil instead of coal. He would like to see the freight on coal reduced so that they could get rid of the large quantity of coal before any method was adopted whereby oil was used in place of coal. In view of the bad finances of the Railway Department, he hoped that the Minister would set an example to hon. members opposite and the people of Queensland, and try to economise as far as possible in that department. When Ministers travelled they should travel, as hon. members had to, like ordinary human beings. He had seen a case coming down from the North where a Minister had members of the Government party with him; and, instead of coming into the sleeping car where there were plenty of berths available, the Minister had a special carriage put on to the train, and, owing to the heavy weight of those carriages, an extra train had to be made up in Maryborough to bring the Minister down. Instead of one train coming to Brisbane, another trip had to be made involving a considerable cost to the Railway Department. Ministers instead of spending a lot of money "junketing" about the country in the way they did and telling their electors on the platform how they were going to conduct the affairs of the State, should travel as ordinary

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human beings, and so do something to cut down the expenditure and so provide some work for the men and women who, unfortunately, had to be retrenched from the railway service.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Lacombe, *Keppel*): He wished to deal with some of the criticisms and suggestions that had been made. Apart from the deplorable piffle talked by the hon. member for Wide Bay, the debate generally had been interesting. It was deplorable that a man should be paid £500 per annum to talk such piffle. Suggestions and criticism had been offered, and the discussion had been interesting for more than one reason. First of all, because hon. members opposite were continually asserting before the Auditor-General's report came down, "Wait until we get the Auditor-General's report!" They got that report, and the sun rose as usual, there were no comets in the sky, the railways ran just the same as usual, and nothing unusual happened. Instead of hon. members opposite getting any fuel to support their criticisms of the Railway Department from the Auditor-General's report, they found that the report was devoid of any serious criticism of the department. The Auditor-General rightly pointed out that the enormous percentage increase in expenditure that the Railway Department was subjected to was the result of the increased wages bill, and the increased cost of fuel, material, etc., and he also inferentially pointed out that the Government policy of keeping freights and fares down was responsible for the earnings being considerably less than they would be and smaller in comparison with the expenditure than they might have been if the policy was pursued in this State as in others of raising freights and fares automatically with working expenses. After the Auditor-General's report was available hon. members found they could find no support for their wild assertions that the railway administration was unsatisfactory, and they came with a fresh cry that the Government refused to allow them to discuss the Railway Estimates. They said, "Why not bring on the Railway Estimates?" Immediately the leader of the Opposition made that complaint, the Premier, supported by himself, asserted that the leader of the Opposition and his colleagues would have the Railway Estimates immediately the Works Department Estimates, which were then under consideration, had been disposed of. He would say honestly, advisedly, and deliberately, that there had been no damaging criticism of the railway administration by hon. members opposite. The discussion had revealed many angles and viewpoints very wide in their diversity, but there was nothing damaging, after taking into consideration the policy of the Government, which was to keep down freights and fares to a reasonable level rather than to increase them, as had been done in Tory-governed States. If there had been bad administration, it would have been reflected in the figures relative to the employees engaged. During the six years of Labour administration, the increase in the number of employees had not been nearly so great as during the last three years of Tory administration. Where, then, was there any proof of unsatisfactory administration? The argument advanced that the railway adminis-

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tration was unsatisfactory was based on the assumption that the earnings did not correspond with the expenditure.

Mr. VOWLES: You have a decreased service.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They had an increased train mileage. It was hardly necessary to emphasise the fact that the earnings could be made up immediately to the point of expenditure if they pursued the policy of increasing fares and freights—which they had not done, and which they did not intend to do at the present time. It was very regrettable that he had to emphasise that point, but the assertion had been made coolly, time and again, without any reference to the facts at all, that the administration was unsatisfactory simply because the earnings did not correspond to the expenditure. He had stressed the fact time and again that the earnings did not correspond with the expenditure in other departments. There might be some difference in detail, but the principle was the same.

Mr. KERR: You said that the other Australian States have increased their fares and freights, while you have not.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The figures he had quoted previously had been prepared by the officers of the department. Those figures—which had been published in "Hansard"—showed that the increase in Queensland had been lower during the last five years than in any of the States where their opponents were in power. When the leader of the Nationalist party was speaking on the question of the railway deficit, he (Mr. Lacombe) had asked him, by way of interjection, if he thought the same argument should apply to education; and the hon. member replied, "No, that is a different matter." It was a different matter, but the principle was the same. That was to say, the indirect return from the Education Department justified the enormous expenditure of £1,000,000 per year, although there was no direct return or profit from it. The railway deficit could be justified on similar grounds.

Mr. TAYLOR: Could you apply that principle to the prisons, too?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: His argument was that the railways stood in a similar relationship to education to the State, because of the tremendous benefits the community derived from both. In attempting to bring about a railway surplus they might injure land settlement, agricultural production, mining development, and everything that would have a tendency to send the population into the country, and that would be purchasing a surplus at an excessive cost. He intended to deal with that point very fully, and he made no apologies for the time he would take up. The Railway Estimates were very important, and he was not going to allow hon. members to criticise those Estimates without his being able to place his views on the matter in "Hansard," so that the electors of Keppel and other electors would be able to read his reply. If all the criticisms and suggestions were not noted, it would not be because of want of courtesy, but because of lack of time to deal with them.

He would emphasise, first, that the Railway Department had effected a considerable

saving this year, as compared with the previous year, of approximately £216,000. Not one member of the Opposition mentioned the fact. Surplus staff had been dispensed with, and various changes effected in the working of the department, and economy was being brought about.

Mr. VOWLES: Has not the decreased cost of material contributed to it?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Not very much, because there had not been a material decrease up to the present. In some cases material was still 400 or 500 per cent. higher than it was in 1914. Although prices might drop soon, a lot of material had been purchased at prices ruling last year. They had to buy stock in some cases for a considerable time ahead.

Mr. GREEN: Are you not cutting down some of the train services?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; we are adjusting the services on some lines.

Mr. GREEN: In the North?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were not cutting down, they were simply adjusting those services. The hon. member knew that the closing down of the Cloncurry line rendered unnecessary the number of trains previously run, and it was the same with regard to Mount Morgan. They might not be running the same number of trains to Mount Morgan, because the mine was closed down.

Mr. GREEN: We have a worse service to Charters Towers than we have had for a long time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The point was made by Government members that there was a decline of revenue, which rendered a readjustment of the staff necessary. That argument applied more particularly to the first three months of the present financial year. Railway deficits existed in Queensland before the Labour Government came into power, and in other countries and States where there were no Labour administrations. Freights and fares had been increased in other countries under Tory governments. There had been plenty of vague criticism by hon. members opposite but they had not weakened the position which he had established. The criticism had been largely political. Hon. members opposite had a right to criticise as an Opposition, but they were not concerned about the logic of their criticism so long as it went down with the electors and they could deceive them.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: That is like yourself. (Opposition laughter.)

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RAILWAY ACCOUNTS IN THE STATES OF QUEENSLAND, NEW SOUTH WALES, VICTORIA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA, WESTERN AUSTRALIA, AND THE DOMINION OF NEW ZEALAND (TAKEN FROM THE LATEST OFFICIAL RECORDS).

Particulars.	Queensland.	New South Wales.	Victoria.	South Australia.	Western Australia	New Zealand.
	Year ended 30 June, 1920.	Year ended 30 June, 1920.	Year ended 30 June, 1919	Year ended 30 June, 1919	Year ended 30 June, 1920.	Year ended 31 Mar., 1920.
Area in square miles ...	670,500	309,480	87,884	380,070	975,920	103,861
Population ...	737,085	2,002,631	1,467,188	455,900	331,005	1,223,915
Miles open ...	5,635	5,015½	4,191	2,293	3,539	3,006
Capital expended on open lines ...	£12,186,985	£79,318,917	£57,545,337	£19,029,801	£18,062,354	£36,390,115
Population per mile of railway ...	130	399	350	199	94	407

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No, it was not. What was wrong with the statements he quoted?

Mr. VOWLES: They are not all in "Hansard."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was a serious thing to say. All the tables he had quoted were in "Hansard." Immediately he finished his speech he tied up his notes and sent them up to the "Hansard" staff. He had given the figures to show that there was a decrease of railway employees, and that there had been an increase in train mileage in 1921 under Labour administration, as compared with an increase in employees and a decrease in train mileage in 1912 under their opponents' administration. All the figures he gave had been verified by the officers of the department.

A few facts and figures would strikingly illustrate the difficulties of railway management in Queensland. They had an area of 675,000 square miles, a population of about 670,000, and 5,700 odd miles of railways—a greater railway mileage than any other State in Australia. Every reasonable-minded critic would realise the difficulties of railway administration in Queensland. He was reminded of what the Chief Commissioner of the New South Wales railways said concerning such vague and unfair criticism. In the "Daily Mail" of 25th August last, he was reported to have said—

"Every day the railways shifted 21,000,000 tons one mile; and yet, if a parcel went astray, it was put down to rotten management."

There was always a certain amount of dissatisfaction in every big concern. Hon. members would hang on straps in the trams when they were going home and never complain in the Press; but, if the State had control of the trams, the Press would be filled with complaints about the unsatisfactory management of the State-owned tramways. He might make a short statistical comparison of Queensland with other States to show how they stood with regard to miles of railway opened, capital invested, and cost per mile, and, to save time, he would put the table into "Hansard" without reading it, with the permission of hon. members.

The CHAIRMAN: Is it the pleasure of the Committee that the table be put into "Hansard"?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS:

That comparison would supplement the arguments which he had put before the Committee. He wished to quote the remarks of the hon. member for Oxley, who, speaking in the Chamber in February, 1920, said—

“We know quite well that in matters of finance, in matters of making our railways and such like institutions pay, the question of immigration is of vital importance, and to contemplate a State of such dimensions with such a scattered population—that, in my judgment, clearly gives the reason why so many of our enterprises fail at the present time.”

Occasionally their opponents appreciated the position, and gave the true reason why railway and other services in Queensland were not paying. With such a large railway mileage in a sparsely populated country like Queensland, there were great difficulties in railway administration.

Mr. FRY: Are you in favour of immigration?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Government had been endeavouring for months to induce the Federal Government to advance the money for an immigration scheme in the Burnett district, but had not succeeded.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Commissioner for Railways tells you not to build more lines, but to use the lines you have got.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Surely the hon. member did not think they were building too many lines at the present time! They had only the Bowen coalfield line, the line from Millaa Millaa to Tarzali, the Gargett to Owens Creek line, and the Innisfail to Tully River line under construction at the present time. The trouble in the past had been that their opponents had constructed too many lines in the same direction, and were responsible for the present position of affairs. They might take the Tarong line as an example. That line ran parallel to the Kingaroy-Nanango line for a distance of 18 miles. At no point was the distance between them more than 12 miles. For the first 4 miles the lines were not 4 miles apart, and for 6 miles not 8 miles apart. That was a purely political line. It was not built in accordance with the original recommendations of the experts of the department. Hon. members opposite talked about political interference. Why did the Tory Government at that time interfere with the scheme recommended by the experts? That was one of handicaps the present Administration had to contend with.

Mr. EDWARDS: Why not explain what the object was in adopting the two routes? Was it not to connect with the Downs and the Brisbane Valley lines?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That was not the proposal—he had looked up the papers in the matter. There was proof of political influence which had been exerted; it was due to Tory maladministration. It was no use hon. members opposite attempting to say that that was not a political line. It was a political line, and a permanent handicap on the Railway Department. Hon. members opposite had talked in a very glib way about mismanagement and the unsatisfactory state of railway administration.

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At 5.30 p.m.,

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

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Phrases like that were very cheap. General remarks, unsupported by sound evidence, were easily made. He would give hon. gentlemen some evidence from the reports of the Auditor-General concerning Tory administration. Hon. members opposite always started off with the supposition that everything in the Tory garden was beautiful. He was going to show them a few prickly-pears, a few brambles, in the Tory administrative garden. At page 53 of his report for 1913 the Auditor-General said—

“I have not yet been furnished with the detailed stock sheets, but am informed that at all the principal centres the stocks were found to be fairly correct, with the exception of the Chief Engineer's Branch, where shortages amounting, approximately, to £10,000 in the stock of permanent way material, as compared with the books, were found. The explanation is that material to a considerable extent has been issued from time to time without a requisition, and there is therefore no record in the books; with the result that the goods appear to be short. An officer of the railway audit staff has been engaged, by direction of the Commissioner, for fully two months endeavouring to trace the issues covering the shortages. This appears to me to be extremely unsatisfactory, and calls for a drastic alteration of system.”

That was the criticism of Tory administration in 1913.

Mr. CORSER: The Auditor-General said he was not going to check some accounts this year because it would cost too much.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was being done with the Auditor-General's sanction. Under Tory administration there was cause for complaint.

Mr. CORSER: By 1914 they had rectified that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Again, in his report for 1913, the Auditor-General said, at page 51—

“In perusing this report I was struck with the magnitude of stocks held by you and by the enormous increase in your stores suspense account. . . .

“There are several other matters connected with your stores system to which I would like to invite your attention at a future date, but they are overshadowed by the enormous sum of £786,000—over £400,000 of which is without Parliamentary sanction.

“In my opinion the Loan Fund Account has been operated on . . . without the authority or knowledge of Parliament.”

What had hon. members to say to that—increase in the Stores Suspense Account and to the Loan Account being operated on without the sanction or authority of Parliament? (Opposition interruption.) The hon. member for Burnett referred to 1914. He would give a quotation from the report of the Auditor-General for that year—

“The purchase of the Renard road train and recently the McKeen motor-cars have, unfortunately, proved a costly

experiment to the department. The price paid for the former was £4,106 7s. and the cost of making roads for the running of same £2,762. During the time it was in use working expenses amounted to £957 5s. 6d. and the earnings £209 6s. 8d.

"The total expenditure to the middle of May last in connection with the purchase and erection of the five McKeen cars, including Customs duty, was £35,727, being £12,352 in excess of the contract price. The Renard road train has been scrapped in the workshop yards for some time—after failing to perform the work expected of it."

That was a monument to Tory mismanagement.

Mr. CORSER: One was running the other day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What did it cost to put them in running order?

Mr. CORSER: You know.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Unfortunately, he did. The earnings in connection with that costly experiment, the Renard road train, amounted to nearly £900, for a return of £200. A nice little deficit that was! The McKeen cars cost £35,727—£12,352 in excess of the estimate. There were other costly toys. This was the great Tory administration that hon. members opposite said they should go back to! In comparison, the present Administration was perfect. In 1914 he found the Auditor-General referred also to the following facts:—He intimated that in 1913 he pointed out that several chief officers were receiving salaries in excess of the amounts voted by Parliament for the year 1913. He referred the matter to the Attorney-General, who supported his contention. He informed the department. His decision was flouted. He stated—

"I have no desire to oppose the advancement of officers in the service, but I submit that the proper procedure has not been followed in this instance, and that Parliament should have been consulted in the matter."

Parliament was flouted, the Auditor-General was insulted, by the Tory party when in power. That was the party which was going to teach the Labour party how to run the railways!

Mr. KERR: What was their surplus that year?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would refer to surpluses and deficits under their respective headings. For the purpose of clarity of reasoning he was dealing with each branch under its proper head. The tank engines purchased by the party of hon. members opposite cost £74,000.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: And they are still running and doing good work.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: To enable them to run, the lines and bridges had to be strengthened; and there was made the sudden discovery that there had been a little blunder amounting to £50,000. That was the record of the party that for the last year or two had been talking about railway administration not being satisfactory!

Mr. CORSER: They paid interest on all those things.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He did not say those were things that another Administration would not have done. He wanted to balance them, however, with the criticism made against the present Government. If, by comparison, he could show such a record of Tory maladministration, he was sure the electors would never dream of changing from Labour Administration to such a party as that. He wanted to quote briefly concerning Tory administration elsewhere. They had had the Tory administration of Victoria held up as an example for them to follow. The following quotation was from the Melbourne "Age" of last year:—

"Yesterday a representative meeting of the grain and produce trade made a pathetic complaint about the mismanagement of the Victorian railways. It was asserted that never within the past twenty-five years had they been in a worse condition than they are in to-day. Amongst the examples quoted in support of this statement was the case of a truck which should have reached its destination in two days being a month on the road 'and not sighted yet.' Another aggrieved consignee had a truck despatched to him on 24th February, which did not arrive until 16th March, and it then took the department three days to find out where it was."

A truck which was dispatched in February arrived in March, and took three days to find! That was the kind of administration which hon. gentlemen opposite wanted the electors of the State to assent to in Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: You lost a truck of wheat.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The Queensland Railway Department had never had a record like that. That was an interesting sidelight on how the Tory party ran the railways in Victoria. He would quote briefly from a Tory journal of New Zealand—"The Press"—of 4th August, 1921. In an article on railway finance, it said—

"In the long list of reductions in services the Canterbury lines are prominent. Most of the branch services are to be cut down by about half. . . ."

"The working expenses, that is to say, absorbed almost the whole of the revenue, leaving nothing to meet the interest on the 40,000,000 of money invested in the system. The railways, that is to say, are being run at a heavy loss, and it is essential that this loss shall be reduced if it cannot be wiped out."

They found that in New Zealand, another Tory-governed country, the working expenses were absorbing practically the whole of the earnings, and the farmers' trains had been cut down by one-half. That was the system hon. members opposite would have them revert to in this State.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They have been cut down more than that here.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member could not say that. He wanted to finalise his remarks on this branch by quoting the following extract from the "Fortnightly Review" of June, 1921, with regard to the railways in Great Britain—

"The following table will indicate more clearly than lengthened argument

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the difficulties with which railway management has to contend—

	1913.	1914.
Salaries and wages ...	£47,000,000	£164,000,000
Number of employees	643,000	700,000
Tonnage carried ...	375,595,000	340,000,000
Coal cost ...	£9,100,000 (approx.)	£23,800,000
Cost of materials ...	£33,000,000	£92,000,000
Total net receipts ...	£48,395,000	£7,500,000
Interest and dividends	£47,000,000	£6,000,000

"It will be seen that, while tonnage carried has diminished by 35,500,000, the number of employees has increased by 76,000, involving in itself an additional wages bill of over £13,000,000, while the aggregate wages bill has increased between three and four times from £47,000,000 to £164,000,000."

That quotation indicated the world-wide nature of railway difficulties. In the countries where there was not a Labour Administration the same causes operated, but in a more intensified form. All the quotations he had made destroyed any criticism which had been urged by hon. members opposite against the Queensland Labour Administration. Let them see what their Tory opponents did in Tasmania on the question of railway economy. This year they had increased the Commissioner's salary by £300, notwithstanding that it was a time of difficulty and distress in that State. If they looked to Tory Administration in this State by way of analogy, they found the same thing. In the South Brisbane City Council the Tory party increased the Mayor's allowance by £100 per annum. In Brisbane the Mayor's allowance had been fixed at £1,000. The history of Tory mismanagement was appalling to a degree. It was deplorable. One could never suggest that they should go back to a party which had such a record. Dealing with the Queensland record in comparison with that of other States, he would quote the following comparative analysis of railway returns in the States of Queensland, South Australia, and West Australia—

Particulars.	Queensland Year ended 30th June, 1920.	South Australia. Year ended 30th June 1920.	Western Australia. Year ended 30th June, 1920.
Earnings per engine	£ 7,417·67	£ 4,890·41	£ 5,418·15
Earnings per carriage (coaching)	1,959 32	1,293·23	1,795·47
Earnings per wagon (goods)	206 77	171·05	138·15
Earnings per head of population	6 14 7	5 4 11	6 18 6
Train mileage	10,443,619	5,412,924	4,851,446

Hon. members would be able to follow those comparisons closely when they appeared in print. They would then see how favourable the Queensland position was in comparison with that of Western Australia, and South Australia in regard to the points upon which he had based his comparison. When one

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realised that Queensland had such a favourable record in regard to those points of comparison, they would see the force of his contention that the minimum freights and fares policy was the real reason why the Administration here showed up so badly in a nominal sense. But it was not only the nominal appearance they had to consider; the whole of the facts and circumstances of the administration must be considered.

The leader of the Opposition spoke on the question of overtime. They all must admit that the overtime question was an important one, and every step that could be taken should be taken to keep the overtime payments within reasonable bounds. Increased overtime payments did not necessarily mean that more overtime was being worked, because, with the increase in wages, an increased rate was payable, and there might be an actual increase in the amount paid without any increase in the hours worked. The question had been receiving the attention of himself, the Commissioner, and the departmental officers, and he was pleased to say that in the first three months of the current financial year there had been a decrease of £11,000 as compared with the corresponding period of last year. The percentage increases in overtime, and the percentage of overtime to expenditure during different periods were—

OVERTIME.

Increase 1910-11 over previous year	...	...	...	...
1912-13	...	...	...	39.69 per cent.
1919-20	...	...	...	12.47 per cent.
1920-21	...	...	...	10.09 per cent.
1920-21	...	...	...	16.05 per cent.

PERCENTAGE OF OVERTIME TO EXPENDITURE.

1910-11	...	...	...	3.85 per cent.
1911-12	...	...	...	3.26 per cent.
1912-13	...	...	...	3.27 per cent.
1913-14	...	...	...	3.23 per cent.
1919-20	...	...	...	3.56 per cent.
1920-21	...	...	...	3.54 per cent.

There was a reduction in the percentage of overtime to expenditure, notwithstanding that an increased amount of overtime was paid last year—it was paid for after eight hours, whereas formerly it was paid after ninety-six hours had been worked per fortnight. During the currency of the war, engine troubles brought about by the inability of the department to get the necessary repair material also increased the overtime pay. The department was conscious of the necessity to restrict overtime payments.

He wanted to read the following memorandum he received from the Commissioner in reply to the statement of the leader of the Opposition that materials, stores, etc., on lines which had been closed down were neglected:—

"I have to advise that on each of the construction jobs which have been closed down, caretakers have been appointed, and as much of the plant as possible has been put under cover. There are certain items of plant, such as pile frames, boilers, and winches, which are exposed to the weather, but these are receiving attention, the pile frames have been painted, the boilers tarred, and the bright parts of the machinery painted with white lead and tallow, and these should not be affected by the weather to any great extent. There are also Koppel wagons, muck wagons, and light rails stacked along some of the lines in places, but these are not affected by the weather to

any great extent, and as a rule are not put under cover.

"On all the lines there are various depôts of bridge timber and sleepers, but the grass is chipped round the stacks to prevent fire, and the caretakers make frequent inspections to see that everything is safe. All the caretakers make fortnightly reports to me, and the inspecting engineer has visited all the jobs closed down.

"With regard to the thefts that have taken place, I have to advise that with the exception of a quantity of powder, and gelignite, that was stolen from the magazine at Farleigh, about 460 lb. in all, thefts have been practically negligible."

Hon. members would thus see that the serious charge of the leader of the Opposition was entirely dissipated.

The hon. members for Normanby said that the Railway Department and the Government generally were making no effort to encourage an export coal trade. That statement was entirely at variance with the facts. Every assistance had been given to the companies which desired to build up an export trade, as he would show by reading a few letters; but he would remind hon. members that the Federal Government actually imposed a coal export embargo some time ago.

Mr. CORSER: For what reason?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Some lame reason was given that Australian supplies were not protected. If that were so, how were they being protected now? Under pressure from the Colliery Proprietors' Association and the Coal Miners' Union, the Federal Government lifted that embargo, but the fact remained that coal export was blocked.

Mr. CORSER: At a time when it was necessary to block it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members might say that, but, if that were so, what was the good of blaming the Queensland Government for not assisting Queensland companies in the export trade? The trade had not nearly recovered from the embargo.

Mr. CORSER: That applies to all industries.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In Australia they had mountains of magnificent coal, men out of employment, and proprietors seeking an export trade. Hon. members should write to the Federal Tory party and find out why the embargo was imposed.

Mr. WARREN: Did you try to get it removed?

At 5.52 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They made strong representations. As Secretary for Railways, he could not understand why it should be imposed, because there was plenty of coal in Australia for their own requirements as well as for export, and the Federal Government's action was only on a par with their action in investing about half a million pounds in the timber industry and milling business in Queensland and then closing down.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Was that embargo not caused by strikes in New South Wales?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Strikes had been taking place in Australia

for years past, and still were taking place. The representatives of the Central Queensland coal companies—introduced by the hon. member for Fitzroy, the hon. member for Mount Morgan, the hon. member for Rockhampton, and the hon. member for Leichhardt—said to him, "We want to commence to build up an export trade, and we want you to assist us by building us facilities at Broadmount." The Government agreed. They then said, "Will you give us an order of 20,000 tons for North Queensland?" The Government said, "Yes, we will." Since then they had come along and said they wanted better facilities for loading coal for ports outside Queensland, and the Government said, "Anything you ask for in reason will be approved." The Government also induced the Federal Government to make a test of the Styx River coal—a magnificent coal for steaming purposes—and that test had proved satisfactory, and at the end of the year there was to be a further test, which, he believed, would lead to building up a tremendous export trade from the Styx River and Rockhampton ports. He wished to read one or two letters selected at random from the scores he had received from the commercial and industrial community in the Central district. (Opposition laughter.) The first was from Mr. Paterson, the manager of the Central Queensland Meat Export Company, at Lake's Creek—

"I desire to congratulate you on the decision of the Cabinet to make use of the long-neglected port of Broadmount for the export of coal from this division, a decision to which, I am sure, your influence contributed."

The Hon. C. F. Nielson, a director of the Blair Athol Company, wrote—

"Bundaberg, 12th September, 1921.

"The Hon. J. Larcombe, Minister for Railways,

Railway Offices, George street, Brisbane.

"Dear Mr. Larcombe,—

"I wish to thank you for the arrangements made for my visit to Broadmount on the 3rd instant, which were in every way most satisfactory.

"At present I am unable to say what suggestion I am likely to receive from the engineer who inspected the natural facilities, but I am in hopes that some practical suggestion may result which will ultimately lead to an export of coal beyond the State.

"Again thanking you.

"Yours faithfully,

"CHAS. F. NIELSON."

The manager of the Central Queensland Meat Export Company wired him when he was about to open a section of the North Coast line as follows:—

"Regret owing accumulation work unable to present congratulating you on pushing ahead with work under present great difficulties."

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: That is important.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was very important, considering the criticism of the hon. member for Normanby, for it showed what the commercial community thought of the action of the Government in giving those facilities at Broadmount, and

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the orders to the Blair Athol Company, and in opening up the North Coast line to Mackay.

With reference to the suggested transfer of a crane from Maryborough to Broadmount, mentioned by the hon. member for Normanby, he wanted to say that the coal companies had never asked for a crane. Their engineer was allowed to go there and co-operate with the railway engineer, and devise the necessary facilities for the export of coal. Practically everything asked for by the companies was granted. Requests had been made from time to time for assistance to the export of coal from Southern Queensland, and he had consented to receive a deputation from one of the companies concerned with reference to the erection of an electric crane at Pinkenba. The deputation subsequently waited on the Treasurer whilst he was absent on the North Coast line; but a report from the Commissioner, whom he had asked for some information, read—

“Memo. for Hon. Minister.

“With reference to proposed deputation from the Colliery Proprietors' Council concerning the question of erecting an additional crane at the Woolloongabba Railway Wharf, I beg to inform you that, in addition to the electric crane, there are four steam cranes, and they are in no way used to anything like approaching their full capacity.

“I am quoting hereunder for your information particulars of the coal shipped over the Woolloongabba wharf for the last ten years, namely:—

	Tons.
1911	321,182
1912	280,945
1913	313,704
1914	324,337
1915	296,041
1916	215,924
1917	254,001
1918	233,437
1919	173,742
1920	267,732
1921 (seven months) ...	150,297

From this it will be observed that the quantity shipped has fallen considerably of late years, and the same facilities exist to deal with the reduced traffic. Notwithstanding that there are five cranes at Woolloongabba, including the electric crane, the latter would be sufficient for all requirements if the boats were dealt with in rotation. The electric crane is not in use half its time, and is very often only used for a couple of hours a day.

“I do not consider there is any necessity for increasing the cranes at Woolloongabba wharf at present.

“(Sgd.) J.W.D.

“23rd August, 1925.”

The Treasurer had received a deputation, and he pointed out that, if the necessary encouragement was given for additional export trade, the Cabinet would

[7 p.m.] consider the question of providing additional export facilities. The information he had given in detail entirely disposed of the argument of the hon. member for Normanby that the Government had not given the necessary encouragement to the coal export trade.

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The hon. member for Enoggera had dealt at great length with railway administration, and quoted a lot of figures which he did not intend to reply to in detail. The hon. member had estimated the approximate increase in salaries and wages, stores, fuel, etc., since 1915 at £2,118,000. According to the information that had been compiled by the department that was an underestimate. Since the year 1914-15, the increases were—

	£
Salaries and wages ...	2,039,000
Stores and contingencies ...	363,000
Fuel	228,000
	£2,630,000

That was since 1914-15, the financial year prior to the present Government assuming control of the Treasury benches and the railway administration. The figures he had quoted were £572,000 greater than those given by the hon. member for Enoggera.

The hon. member also omitted to mention that the average cost of coal had increased in 1914-15 from 10s. 5½d. per ton to 20s. 10d. in 1920-21, and that the price of rails had increased from £8 per ton in 1914-15 to £17 2s. 6d. in 1920-21. They were tremendous increases that had been overlooked by the hon. member.

Hon. members opposite, including the hon. member for Bulimba, had made reference to what they considered the unsatisfactory condition of the accommodation provided for railway employees. The Minister and the Cabinet generally, realised that the accommodation was not what it should be, but they also asserted that they had done enormously more than was done by their predecessors. It was really largely owing to the fact that their predecessors left such an accumulation of work to be done that the present Government had taken so long to catch up with the arrears.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Do you allow the plea of financial embarrassment to apply to private individuals in connection with providing proper accommodation for their employees?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: There was no financial embarrassment with the previous Administration. The previous Administration had splendid seasons, no war, no financial boycott, and trade was normal; and they had a splendid chance of carrying out the policy of improving the accommodation for railway employees. In 1914-15 the amount expended from revenue and on the Loan Estimates for the construction of houses for railway employees was £1,912, and in 1920-21 the amount was £15,044. That was a great difference, and emphasised in a striking manner what he had said by way of interjection that afternoon, that the present Government were doing enormously more than their predecessors in that respect. Between 1916-17 and 1920-21, the present Government had spent £30,242 on accommodation of that kind. He did not contend seriously that all that should be done had been done, but the Government were constantly endeavouring to catch up with arrears. There was not the same cause for complaint now as when the present Administration first took over the railways.

Mr. PETRIE: Would not £10,000 go a good deal further in 1914-15?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The amount spent in 1914-15 was £1,912, and

the amount spent in 1920-21 was £15,044. Those were the figures for the last year of the anti-Labour Administration and the last year of Labour Administration. If the party opposite were so desperately anxious to improve the condition of railway workers, they had the opportunity when things were normal, yet they failed to spend more than the small amount of money he had mentioned. There was no reasonable basis for complaint when one analysed the figures he had quoted.

Mr. VOWLES: You are compelling private employers to do what you are not doing yourselves.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were gradually overtaking the arrears.

The leader of the Nationalist party had dealt with the question of the railway deficit in a very interesting way, and he (Mr. Larcombe) could not complain of the viewpoint placed before the Committee by that hon. member. He entirely dissented from the argument that the railway service should be treated in the same light as private business concerns. The analogy was fatal, for the reason that a private company was concerned about profits only and about a direct return on its money. Private companies were under no obligation to assist land settlement, stimulate agricultural development, mining development, or to induce people to go out in the country and remain there. That was an obligation upon the State. If they were to treat the railways in the same way as a private concern conducted its business, the same argument applied to education; but that was not a fair method of reasoning. They had to consider the indirect benefit derived from education. As far as possible they should balance the ledger, although the time would come in the history of the State when that would not be considered as nearly so essential as it was to-day. He believed that the objection to the railway deficit to-day was not so much to the deficit itself as to the way in which it was to be made up. It was to be made up by the great land monopolist and great wealthy companies.

Mr. JONES: And small selectors.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No; the small selectors were being relieved.

Mr. JONES: By raising their rent 300 per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: What would be the effect of relieving the land monopolist and wealthy companies from this burden of taxation, and transferring a deficiency of something like £2,000,000 from the Consolidated Revenue to the users of the railway—the small primary producers, and those concerned in mining development, coal export, and other such traders? The question was one of conflicting ideas. It was a question as to where the readjustment should take place—whether they should go on as they were doing, getting the deficiency from the wealthy, or whether they should place the burden of taxation upon the primary producers and small selectors and those who went out away from the railways and towns to build up this great State.

Mr. VOWLES: You want to reverse that and give the producers more encouragement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They were giving them encouragement, because the rate on agricultural produce was

lower than in any other State in Australia, and the increased rates on the necessities of life had been very small and had been lower than in any other State, indicating that they had all the time considered the primary producers. The effect of the policy advocated by hon. members opposite would be simply to transfer a burden of nearly £2,000,000 from the wealthy city magnates to the producers in the country.

Mr. ROBERTS: Do you not think that the man in the city gets the advantage of the cheap rates?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: By transferring that £2,000,000 burden to the primary producers they would handicap production heavily and would also, incidentally, relieve the wealthy city man of £2,000,000 of taxation. Rightly there was no such thing as a railway deficiency at the present time, because the money that would have been paid to make up the railway deficiency was in the pockets of the producers at the present time. Last year £2,000,000 would have been dragged out of the pockets of the primary producers to convert the deficiency into a surplus had their opponents been in power. He would read an article written by Captain H. G. Smart, Director of the Engineering Branch for the Commonwealth Government in London, dealing with the question of the difference between private enterprise and State enterprise in relation to railways. That article stated—

“ If it had been left to private enterprise to construct railways in Australia, the Commonwealth would to-day be without railway transport, excepting in the more populous districts. The Australian States were compelled to build a large number of railways in advance of profitable traffic. When the service these railways render to the people is considered, and the magnificent industrial basis they have formed for the development of the vast interior of Australia, it can hardly be denied that the Australian railways as a business asset are as valuable a possession as any nation can show.

“ What private company would have dared to build Australia's 1,000 miles of transcontinental line? A private firm would give consideration only to the payment of immediate dividends. Surely State enterprise is not to be blamed for far-sighted expenditure of public money, even though the immediate result be an addition to the national debt. These new lines which the State and Commonwealth are building develop vast tracts of country ”

That was a sound common-sense view. In a few lines Captain Smart emphasised the difference between a private company and the State in the matter of railway construction and development. No private company would have gone in for the construction of the lines they had built in Australia outside populous areas. Lines would have been built around towns and large profits made, and the people in the backblocks would have suffered.

Mr. MOORE: What about Canada? You said no private company would have done it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: In Canada they made the farmer pay through the nose. In Queensland they had a railway policy that assisted the farmer. In Canada and the

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United States of America the farmer was bled by the policy pursued. The primary consideration there was simply big dividends. No private company would have built railways into the outlying portions of Queensland as the State had done. Take the Commonwealth Bank, in which there were to-day millions of pounds to the credit of the Commonwealth Government. They remembered the great cry that was raised by the opponents of Labour against the establishment of the bank.

Mr. MAXWELL: Do you anticipate that with the railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They could get a railway surplus to-morrow if they increased rates, like the Post and Telegraph Department were doing in connection with postal and telegraphic charges.

The policy of the Opposition with regard to railway reform was (1) to increase fares and freights—

Mr. CORSER: Wrong.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: (2) Reduce wages, (3) reduce the train service, and (4) curtail the staff.

Mr. VOWLES: You are wrong in every case.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Albert that afternoon confirmed what he had previously said on the matter of increased fares. The leader of the Nationalist party and the hon. member for Warwick advocated the same thing. The hon. member for Port Curtis had stated in a speech he had made in that Chamber—

“There are many ways of retrieving the position of the railways. He did not say it should be done by sacking men holus-bolus and reducing wages. They should do something better than that. Possibly they might be able to reorganise the train service by running fewer trains.”

Further on he said there might also have been some reduction in wages, and that in some directions they would have to increase fares and freights. He also admitted that they might have to go in for a little retrenchment.

Mr. VOWLES: You said the Opposition.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: One must infer that admissions from hon. members opposite indicated that their policy ran along the lines they had mentioned. The hon. member for Murrumba and the hon. member for Nanango had both advocated three Commissioners instead of one, which would add another £4,000 or £5,000 to the railway expenditure.

The revenue had suffered greatly through the abolition of the Railways Guarantee Act. The indebtedness in respect of the railways to which the Railways Guarantee Act would have applied, had it not been repealed by the present Government—taking, first, the three last years of the administration of the party opposite, was—

	£
1912-13	57,214
1913-14	83,409
1914-15	79,734
	£220,357

[Hon. J. Larcombe.

The approximate annual loss to revenue from 1915-16 to 1920-21, during the régime of the present Government, was—

	£
1915-16	120,000
1916-17	191,000
1917-18	296,000
1918-18	345,000
1919-20	350,000
1920-21	354,000
	£1,656,000

That amount of money had been lost to revenue because the Government had removed the class tax which had been imposed upon the settlers of the State by the Opposition party. (Opposition dissent.) That accounted for a considerable proportion of the deficiency in revenue. When he (Mr. Larcombe) came into the House, in 1912, he supported the abolition of the Railways Guarantee Act; but their opponents scouted the idea, and said that the railways must pay even if they were country lines. The present Government wiped off £220,000 of indebtedness under the Act straight away. He wanted the electors to realise that the Government had relieved them of that enormous amount. The leader of the Nationalist party, in 1918, said—

“The railways guarantee system had been brought up. There was a good deal to be said in favour of that system. He did not altogether agree with the Minister that it had inflicted very great injury on the various districts where it had been in operation.”

The repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act had relieved the country people of the liability to contribute £2,000,000 last year. That was one reason why the revenue of the Railway Department was not greater than it was.

Hon. members opposite had said a lot about political interference, but it was a remarkable thing that those hon. members were the first to approach the Minister and endeavour to have the decision of the Commissioner set aside. The hon. member for Bulimba three days ago wrote to him, asking him to receive a deputation from the Belmont taxpayers, who wished to ask him and the Cabinet to approve of the taking over of a certain railway from the local authority there. If the hon. member believed in Commissioner control, why did he come to the Minister? Why did he not go to the Commissioner?

Mr. MORGAN: We could not approach the Commissioner on a matter like that.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member knew quite well that he could. When decisions were given by the Minister which did not suit hon. members opposite, they claimed that it was political or Ministerial interference. In 1912, the hon. member for Bulimba, when he was Secretary for Public Works, stepped in and nullified the decision of a wages board under the Wages Boards Act. The Carters' Union, of which he (Mr. Larcombe) was then the secretary, had been on the point of striking for months, and he had induced them to consider peaceable methods, and go before the Wages Board and get an award in a constitutional way. They did so, and got an award of a forty-eight-hour week and a wage of £3 per week. Thereupon the Employers' Federation sent a deputation to Brisbane to interview the Minister, who a few weeks afterwards suspended the award. Hon. members opposite

were guilty in an intensified form of all the political sins they accuse the Government of. The leader of the Country party, which stood for independent Commissioner control, had sent him the following letter on behalf of his party:—

“Brisbane, 14th April, 1921.

“Sir,—At a meeting of the Country party, held to-day, the following resolution was agreed to:—

‘That the action of the Commissioner for Railways in closing certain gate-houses in the country was false economy, and would cause great inconvenience to residents in these districts.’

“I was instructed to point out to you that these gatekeepers have been accustomed to perform many duties in addition to that of gatekeeping. The sale of stamps, etc., payment of pensions, issuing tickets, arranging for wagons, delivering of c.o.d. parcels, were instanced.

“The loss of these conveniences in the Country is not likely to encourage settlement, and I trust that the matter will have your further consideration.

“I have the honour to be, Sir

“Yours obediently,

“(Sgd.) W. J. VOWLES,
“Leader, Country Party.

“The Honourable the Secretary for Railways, Brisbane.”

They complained of the action of the Commissioner, and asked the Minister to override his decisions in an official matter.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They urged him to exercise the political influence that they complained about. Why did they send along these resolutions asking him to exercise political interference, and then object in that Chamber to such interference?

[7.30 p.m.]

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Don't you, as Minister, enunciate the policy of the department?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members on the other side were not consistent.

Mr. VOWLES: Did you take any action?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. gentleman was not going to get him off the track. That was the request.

Mr. VOWLES: What was the reply?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The reply had no bearing on the matter at all. (Ironical Opposition laughter.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Read it!

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was going to take one step at a time. He wanted to show that, when hon. members asked him to override the action of the Commissioner, they were asking him to exercise political interference, to which they objected in their platform and in their utterances in that Chamber. They, as a party, stood for political interference. This was his reply—

“Office of the Minister for Railways,

“Brisbane, 25th April, 1921.

“Dear Sir,—With further reference to your letter of the 14th instant conveying

resolution of protest from the Country party against the cutting out of certain gatekeepers, I desire to state that I have gone fully into the matter and find that at a number of stations the traffic is very small and does not warrant the continuance of gatekeepers. The following shows the number of passengers registered at some of the stations affected for the past year—

1. Twenty-two.
2. Sixty-five.
3. Ninety-nine.
4. One hundred and twenty-two.

“The revenue from parcels and miscellaneous at some of the stations during the past year was as follows:—

1. £1.
2. £2.
3. £3.
4. £4.
5. £6.
6. £7.

“The matter of sale of stamps and payment of pensions is a Federal one.”

Mr. VOWLES: Did you refer me to the Commissioner?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member thought he was going to score a point by having that letter read. He referred the hon. member to the Commissioner now. He had no objection to any member coming to him, but he did object to a member complaining in that Chamber of Ministerial interference after he had been to him. Who brought into existence this system of dual control? Was it not hon. members opposite?

Mr. VOWLES: Not the Country party.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Their hypocrisy was instanced in that connection. They brought into operation the system they now complained about. If they had desired, they could have appointed a Commissioner or a Board of Commissioners above the power of Parliament. Why did they not do so? They came along and asked him to override the decision of the Commissioner, and then in Parliament complained about Ministerial interference.

Mr. CORSER: Who squashed the Economy Board report—you or the Commissioner?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had squashed the hon. member on this argument.

Mr. MORGAN: You did not finish that letter.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had. The hon. member for Murilla on many occasions in that Chamber had objected to what he considered to be independent Commissionership control in connection with the Commissioner of the State Savings Bank. He recollected the hon. member for Murilla and the hon. member for Burnett complaining bitterly—

Mr. CORSER: About the man you appointed.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: About the independent Commissionership control. Regarding the matter of political control, he would ask hon. members to listen to what the late Commissioner, Mr. Evans, said. His remarks were reported in the

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"Daily Standard" of 20th July, 1918. He was asked—

"Do you think the railways should be removed completely from political control?"

"In my opinion it is not possible," was the reply.

"Why?" the interviewer asked.

"Because the railways are the property of the people and are a very large factor in the prosperity of the State. Therefore, it naturally follows that the representatives of the people must have some influence over the management of a property worth probably £40,000,000.

It would be most unwise to place property of that value under the control of one man, or even of a board, and expect it to be worked for the development of the country free from political influence."

That was the opinion of the late Commissioner, who worked his way up from the lowest to the highest rung of the ladder, and had a service of nearly half a century in the Railway Department. It was his considered opinion after many years as Commissioner, and he (Mr. Larcombe) placed it on record. If hon. members opposite get an independent Commissioner-ship system, they would be only out of one difficulty into another. He could imagine the hon. member for Burnett and the hon. member for Murilla coming down to that Chamber and storming because an independent Commissioner refused to reopen gate-houses that were not justified when they asked for such. They would have hours of discussion in that Chamber against the system, and those hon. members would ask for the removal of the independent Commissioner or Commissioners.

The hon. member for Oxley had spoken about a light class of cars for conveying passengers, etc. The hon. member referred to a passage in the Commissioner's report, and said he thought this was a very important phase of railway policy which should be further considered. For a long time in Queensland that question had been under consideration. They had had rail-motors in various districts in the State which had not given the satisfaction that was expected of them. Further consideration of the question was necessary, as was indicated by the Commissioner in the paragraph which the hon. member quoted. The suggestion would not be overlooked, nor would many other suggestions or criticisms which had been made.

Although time did not permit him to deal with criticisms and suggestions in full, hon. members could rest assured that the closest consideration would be given to them, and where they were well founded the department would profit by them. A good deal of criticism had been given with an entire absence of knowledge of the facts, and it was very widely astray. Such criticism did the department a good deal of damage, and often damaged the State as well. Intending settlers, reading the criticism of hon. members in regard to the railway service, would probably be scared off coming to Queensland. Let the criticism be closely confined to fact and reality, and not be in the domain of vague generality, such as most of it had been.

Mr. VOWLES: Did you read what the Sydney "Bulletin" said about you last week?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He read what a lot of papers said about him.

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He had read what the "Worker" said about the leader of the Opposition, but that did not bear upon the fact, and it did not make the matter right or wrong. The "Bulletin" was simply a journal run by the capitalists of Australia. It was concerned about discrediting State enterprise, including State railways. It got its information regarding Queensland from some political partisan, and it had no more value than what was said by political opponents of the Government here. The article the hon. gentleman referred to was simply the ebullition of a writer in a paper which was out to protect vested interests. One might as well take up the "Courier" or the "Daily Mail," and expect to get a fair criticism of the railway service from those papers as to expect to get it from the Sydney "Bulletin." All those papers were out to damage State enterprises, whether it was the railway enterprise, the Education Department, or the State butcheries.

The hon. member for Oxley again referred to his interjection when he (Mr. Larcombe) on the last occasion was dealing with industrial arbitration. The hon. member further emphasised his statement that the abolition of the Industrial Arbitration Court would not mean industrial anarchy. He (Mr. Larcombe) repeated advisedly the statement that it would do so. The hon. member for Oxley asked where was their industrial anarchy before the Industrial Arbitration Act was passed in Queensland, or in other parts of the world where there was no industrial arbitration legislation? Hon. members would recollect the 1912 strike, which was bordering on industrial anarchy. That strike need not, and would not, have happened had there been sound industrial legislation on the statute-book. The Commonwealth Statistician pointed out that for the fourth quarter of 1920 the working days and wages lost in Queensland were lower than in any other State in Australia with the exception, perhaps of Tasmania. That showed how advantageous the Queensland industrial legislation had been. It was practically an insurance against industrial disturbance. If there were industrial disturbance, if produce were rotting, and trade were dislocated, the loss would be enormously greater than the increase granted in wages. Hon. members opposite need not think they were going to get away from the payment to workers of reasonable wages by abolishing industrial arbitration. That would only bring about industrial chaos and desolation in the State. They need not take the word of any partisan for that. If they took the reports of high, independent authorities, who were concerned about a solution of their industrial problems, they would find that those gentlemen told them that, if they annihilated industrial machinery such as existed in Queensland, which gave quick, direct, and satisfactory results, they would produce disastrous results in the State.

Mr. MORGAN: The Mount Morgan workmen do not agree with you.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If they looked to the other side of the world, they would see there were serious industrial dislocation and disturbance. According to the anti-Labour Press a few weeks back, strikes took place, and police bâtons were used in Dundee. Industrial anarchy was taking place in other parts of the world where there was no satisfactory industrial machinery. He admitted that it was intensi-

fied by the unemployed problem. Still, the absence of protective satisfactory industrial machinery was a contributing factor. Sound industrial peace could be secured only by industrial justice. If they bated men into submission, those men would reassert themselves on some other occasion. They could not bring about industrial peace except upon the eternal principles of industrial justice and fairness. He thought he had said sufficient to indicate that the industrial legislation of the Government was sound and infinitely superior to what it was before they came into power. They had the Wages Board system when he came into that Chamber first. The then Secretary for Public Works, the hon. member for Bulimba, deliberately interfered with an award which had been arrived at by a Wages Board. That hon. member suspended the provisions of the award. Yet hon. members opposite expected industrial peace to prevail. It would never prevail while they had Ministerial interference in that manner with industrial awards. He was reminded of a couplet quoted by the present Premier when he was in Opposition, when he spoke on the Industrial Peace Bill. It was taken from Byron, and was as follows:—

“Mark where his carnage and his conquest cease!

He makes a solitude and calls it peace.”

Hon. members opposite produced peace by bludgeon, the bâton, but the electors rose in their might and returned this Government to power when they learned the true facts in 1915. They asserted their sense of fairness and right, and relegated to political oblivion the party opposite, who had been in political oblivion ever since. When the strike ended, about February, the Premier immediately rushed on an election, and the people did not know exactly what the position was. Where the people knew the facts—in the metropolitan area—the Labour party swept the polls; but in the country districts, where the facts were not known, except as misrepresented by the Tory Press, they were beaten.

He thought he had said sufficient to show that the railway administration of Queensland was sound and stood for the interests of the primary producer and the industrial worker, and was of no disadvantage even to the wealthy traders of Queen street. They were certainly asking them to contribute a fair share towards the railway deficiencies, and that was only asking them to pay a fair share towards the needs of this great and prosperous State of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): He was quite satisfied that the Opposition always would try to blame the workers for the mismanagement of the railways. They accused them of running trains late for the purpose of making overtime; the hon. member for Pittsworth said so in one of his speeches. The whole of the arguments of members opposite had been that the earning power of workers in 1913 was greater than it was to-day. They all knew that in 1913-14 wages were not as high as they were to-day, and consequently the workers, owing to the increased wages and better conditions, were not able to return proportionately the same amount. So far as he knew of the railway men, they were equal to the workers in any other industry, and they had proved that since the Government had given them better conditions. During the days of the Tory

Government no particular care was taken as to how they were housed. Between Charters Towers and Cloncurry there was not even sufficient timber to enable the employees to build decent places, or even to put up tents in which to live, and enjoy a little comfort. They were dumped down wherever the Government chose to put them.

During the next financial year he hoped the Government would take into consideration the condition of the railway workshops in Townsville. Other Ministers had promised that they would alter the shops, especially the blacksmiths' shop. The shops were not fit for the large number of men there to work in them. They had workmen there able to do work equal to that turned out by any other workshops, but they had not the same facilities as the workshops in the South. He hoped that the Government, instead of getting all their carriages and wagons built in the South, would confine Northern work to the shops in North Queensland, thereby keeping the men there employed. It had been represented to him by tradesmen that the work could be done equally as well and as cheaply in Townsville, if they had the facilities to do it.

A great deal of the loss of revenue on the Northern railways was due to the causes pointed out by the Acting Deputy Commissioner in North Queensland in his report—

“The revenue on the Great Northern and Bowen Railway is derived principally from primary industries, such as mining, meatworks, grazing, pastoral, and sugar. The failure of any one of these industries in any year would have a very detrimental influence on revenue. By closing down the mining industry a serious loss resulted to this railway, more particularly on the Western lines of which Cloncurry is the centre. From estimates taken out, it is no exaggeration to fix the loss of revenue to the Great Northern Railway, through this source alone, at £20,000 per month, or a total of £140,000 since the smelters ceased working. The failure of the cattle industry and the general depression also contributed to bring about the reduced revenue.”

Mining was responsible for a great amount of the traffic, which used to be worked in conjunction with the meat industry traffic. The coal wagons that went to Mount Cuthbert, Hampden, and Cloncurry brought back cattle, but during last season they would go out empty, so that the loss of revenue was considerable. Wages also had been responsible in a sense for the loss in running the railways. Before the present Government came into office the Commissioner, if he thought fit, would grant 6d. or 9d. a day increase at the end of the financial year, or in some years would not grant anything at all. The workers were refused permission to go to the Industrial Arbitration Court or even to have the services of a judge to hear their grievances. Hon. members opposite told them that they believed in round-table conferences, but the Secretary for Railways had shown what they thought of the determination of wages board awards when they cancelled an award legally given by a wages board.

Hon. members opposite had also said that the Arbitration Court awards had prevented young men from learning trades. That was not correct, and could not be proved. They

Mr. Dash. †

would find out that the employers were not employing up to the proportion of apprentices they were allowed. The truth was that they wanted to use them as handy men and get rid of them when they pleased.

The hon. member for Townsville had read a letter from a man who was supposed to have been dismissed from the railway service through no fault of his own, and whose wife was suffering from cancer, and who was likely to lose the home he was buying under the Workers' Dwelling Act. Since that appeared in "Hansard," some railway employees had written to him explaining the whole position, and had requested him to make known their opinion on the matter, and the actual facts concerning the employee, whose name he did not want to give because he recognised that he had to get a living. The following was a copy of a letter, dated 8th September, 1921, from a man in the locomotive workshops, Townsville:—

"Dear Jack,

"I notice a letter appears in 'Hansard' which warrants some attention, and the facts are as stated. The letter was received by W. H. Green, and read by him in the House during one of his speeches, while referring to the railway retrenchments. It is contained in 'Hansard' No. 3, page 85. The case is of a man who was sacked, and has a wife and five children, and at present his wife is in the hospital suffering from that dreadful disease, cancer. Throughout the shop this letter has been discussed by nearly all, and the general opinion is that someone should let you know something about the case of the man whom Green refers to. In the workshop so far there have only been six men put off, three owing to old-age or infirmity, and two fitters and one painter. So far, from the description given, we know he refers to —, and from his own statement I know he has five children and his wife is very ill in the hospital with cancer, and he also has a house under the Workers' Dwelling Act. He is the only man sacked whom I know can truly comply with the facts as stated by W. H. Green; and he was not sacked as the result of the Economy Board. In fact, he sacked himself by his conduct. Yet, in all fairness to Crowther, I think he got a clearance the same as the rest, that is, that he was put off owing to falling off of the traffic. This chap has been suspended several times for the same complaint (drink), and on one of his suspension bouts, an enquiry was held, and he went and got W. H. Green to appear as a witness for him at the said enquiry to prove that he was not drunk. Jack, it is to me very hard to write as I am doing regarding another worker, but when such a worker can drop so low as what he has done in writing to Green, and he, Green, is equally as dirty to bring up such a case in the House, as Green knows what — is, I am sure. Now the case being made out by printing in 'Hansard,' throws a great slur on the Government and on Crowther, and such a case as it appears in 'Hansard,' will get the sympathy of people here and people in other States who read it. Hence we reckon such should be corrected through 'Hansard,' or at least some reference should be made by you or someone else.

"Green also states that the man was not a supporter of his. Well, what did

[Mr. Dash.

he write to him for, if such was the case? — was the man that took the chair at one of Green's meetings in the West End."

Mr. GREEN: That is a lie.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GREEN: It is not true. He took the chair at one of Mr. D. Ryan's meetings at West End.

Mr. DASH: That was what the letter stated.

"During Miss Preston Stanley's visit to Townsville, when she spoke in support of Bamford, he — moved a vote of confidence in Bamford and his party, and then Green says — is no supporter of his. Jack, the whole affair makes one's blood boil to see such coming from a worker against a party which did so much for us — included. Then we read of Green preaching efficiency, and at the same time running down the Labour Government for trying to put it into practice.

"Yours faithfully."

" — "

The other letter was dated from Townsville on 6th September, and was as follows:—

"J. Dash, Esq.,

"Dear Jack,

"You will forgive me, I hope, for writing out of my turn, but I am forced to write to you on this occasion by the fact that I have found "Hansard" No. 3, page 85, of such importance to warrant my so doing. Well, Jack, if Mr. W. H. Green is going to be so ridiculous and base to make use of such a case as he refers to in his speech—viz., a letter received from a certain man employed in these shops, in the manner he does, I think it fit and proper to give you some of the honest circumstances of most of the cases of retrenchment here. I feel sure I am correct that the man he speaks of is —, and if such is the case, perhaps it would be well for you to know this. This man has had no less than seventeen chances to reform his ways of drinking to excess, and has failed. Last time he was under consideration, Mr. Green gave evidence on his behalf in the locomotive foreman's office. I understand this man was chairman of one of Mr. Green's meetings in Townsville, and, finally, I may add, that during the Federal campaign, when Miss Preston Stanley was here — moved the motion of confidence in Bamford at one of her meetings, and still Mr. Green has the cheek to make the statement that — is no supporter of his. I take it he means his party. He cannot be Labour, can he? We are giving Green's statement every publicity here, and many of his railway supporters are now sorry and surprised at his falling for a man like —. I want this understood, that the Labour party did not sack —, but that he sacked himself absolutely, as you see by the fact that he had seventeen chances to reform.

"Yours faithfully."

" — "

[8 p.m.]

They were two letters received from the men in the workshops who wanted to correct

the statements made with regard to the men dismissed in Townsville.

Mr. MOORE: They both made incorrect statements—

Mr. DASH: He was not responsible for the statements they made.

Mr. GREEN: He took the chair at Mr. D. Ryan's meeting at West End. They are wrong.

Mr. DASH: These men were quite satisfied as to why he was dismissed from the Railway Department. There was no doubt that he was dismissed on account of getting under the influence of liquor so often. He chiefly wanted to refute the statement made some time ago by the hon. member for Townsville, who would not reveal the name of the person he received the letter from. These gentlemen wanted to correct that.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): He wished to deal with the question of the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act. Hon. members opposite had stated it had been done by this Government, but on looking through "Hansard" for 1906, when the Bill was under discussion, he found that a great number of Labour members then in the House voted in support of putting the guarantee on to the country people, and, so far as he could see, the only member with Labour tendencies who voted against it was Mr. Jones, the present Secretary for Mines. In the division against that Bill many were friends of the so-called Tories that the Secretary for Railways was so fond of referring to.

Mr. RIORDAN: Read the division list.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: In looking through the 1918 "Hansard" he found the names of a great many hon. members still sitting on the Government side who had voted against the motion of Mr. Corser, the hon. member for Burnett, to abolish the guarantee system. In that division he found the names of Mr. Barber, Mr. Fihelly, Mr. Gilday, Mr. Huxham, Mr. Kirwan, Mr. Land, and Mr. McCormack—in all, there were fourteen hon. members of the party opposite who voted in favour of continuing the guarantee principle, yet the hon. gentleman had the infernal impudence to stand up and say that his party were in favour of repealing the Railway Guarantee Act, and that they were the party who did repeal it.

Mr. HARTLEY: So we did in 1915.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Government repealed the Act because they thought they would make some political capital out of it; but they imposed a land tax whereby they could get more revenue than they tried to lead hon. members to believe they had lost by the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act. The Secretary for Railways had repeatedly stated that the Government had wiped out the Railway Guarantee Act in order to assist the man on the land.

Mr. HARTLEY: Is that not correct?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It was a very strange thing that in the divisions in 1906 and 1914 they found hon. members opposite voting with the so-called Tory Government to place an imposition upon the man on the land.

Mr. HARTLEY: Who did repeal the Act?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Secretary for Railways had led them to believe, in reply to a question that afternoon, that he would give some information with regard to

a particular piece of work carried out at Toowoomba.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: So I will.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: So far he had not done that; he would like to hear something about it. He wished to refute the statement made by the Secretary for Railways, and he trusted that the Minister's other facts and figures of what the Government had done to relieve the man on the land from certain taxation were a little nearer the fact than they would have hon. members believe in regard to the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): There was no doubt that any argument would suit or any excuse would do to draw attention from the subject under discussion. The Secretary for Railways was to be congratulated, all things being considered, upon the position the railway service was in at the present time. It compared favourably with any other railway service in the Commonwealth, and with some of the larger railway services in other parts of the world.

The hon. member for Pittsworth seemed to think that the only Parliament that dealt with the repeal of the Railways Guarantee Act was the Parliament of 1914, but it was the present Parliament in its first session that repealed the Act, and most hon. members on this side of the Chamber voted for the repeal of that Act, thereby relieving country districts of a big charge that was being made for the upkeep of railways in those districts.

Mr. COSTELLO: What land tax was put on?

Mr. CORSER: Read the division list.

Mr. HARTLEY: The railway guarantee principle was abolished by the present Government during its first session. This was the division list as reported in 1915-16 "Hansard," at page 2914—

"Question—That clause 15 stand part of the Bill—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 39.

Mr. Adamson	Mr. Jones, A. J.
" Armfield	" Jones, T. L.
" Barnes	" Land
" Bayley	" Larcombe
" Bertram	" McMinn
" Bowman	" McPhail
" Carter	" Moore
" Collins	" Morgan
" Cooper	" O'Sullivan
" Corser	" Peterson
" Foley	" Ryan, D.
" Forsyth	" Smith
" Gilday	" Stevens
" Gillies	" Stopford
" Gledson	" Swayne
" Grayson	" Theodore
" Hartley, H. L.	" Tolmie
" Hartley, W.	" Vowles
" Hodge	" Walker
" Hunter	

Tellers: Mr. H. L. Hartley and Mr. Larcombe.

NOES, 8.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Payne
" Bridges	" Pollock
" May	" Ryan, H. J.
" Murphy	" Winstanley

Tellers: Mr. Barber and Mr. Murphy.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah'

Mr. HARTLEY: Two Opposition members—the leader of the Country party and the sub-leader—voted with the Government on that occasion.

Mr. MOORE: It was the Opposition who carried it.

Mr. Hartley.]

Mr. HARTLEY: He wanted to show the petty political subterfuge of the hon. member for Pittsworth in quoting the old division of 1914 for political trickery and nothing else.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): In the 1912 Parliament there were two main questions advocated by the members of the Country party—main roads and the abolition of the Railways Guarantee Act—and he was sorry that the Country party had not taken possession of the Government at that time. With regard to main roads, they asked the then Home Secretary, the hon. member for Albert, if he could give them a Main Roads Bill in order to provide feeders for the railways, and the Home Secretary had replied, "Yes, I will give it to you, but you will have a further land tax to pay for it. We have no money otherwise." When the present Government came in they brought in the Main Roads Bill to assist the railways, but they also took by land taxation an amount of about £500,000 per annum, and left the farmers to pay for the main roads as well.

Mr. DUNSTAN: The farmers only pay 4 per cent. of the land tax.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The farmers knew what they paid. The whole liability under the Railways Guarantee Act at the time it was repealed was about £150,000.

Mr. GLEDSON: £220,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would take that amount. There was a possibility of the liability in connection with a guaranteed railway terminating, because, when a railway had paid its way for two years, the guarantee ceased; but the Government took that liability over, and put on a land tax, which the present Premier, who was Treasurer at the time, said would bring in £160,000, but he knew that it would bring in over £300,000. The Government had collected £378,000 from it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Not from the farmers.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will recognise that the land tax is not now under discussion.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That tax was imposed in place of the railway guarantee, and the Government had taken in one year under that tax double the amount of the liability under the Railways Guarantee Act.

Question put and passed.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS moved—That £3,090,773 be granted for "Southern Division." There was no necessity for him to say anything on the vote, as the explanation he gave on the first vote held good with regard to it. There had been some increases, but there had been more than counterbalancing savings. While the appropriation for 1920-21 was £2,888,437, the expenditure had been £3,028,782. There was a slight increase in this year's vote nominally due to the fact that the increased awards of last year had to be paid this year. Considerable economy had been effected on the vote for this branch, as well as on the vote generally.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): He would like to refer to the motor carriage which was running in the South-Eastern Division. So far as he could gather from the Minister, the earnings

in connection with the motor carriage were £668 and the expenditure was £948. The Commissioner here said it was not a satisfactory form of transit, but in New South Wales they were so satisfied with it that they were building as many more as they possibly could. He would like to quote the position in regard to New South Wales—

"The earnings amounted to £2,377, and the working expenses to £922, or 38½ per cent. of the earnings."

Those motor-cars had also a trailer behind them for carrying cream. They were so successful in New South Wales that the Government there were making more and enlarging the size of the carriages. It would be worth while for the Commissioner to find out from New South Wales the reasons for the success of the motor carriages there, in order to see if they could not be used more successfully here. As the working expenses in Queensland were about 30 per cent. higher than the revenue derived, there was something wrong somewhere, and they could perhaps find out from the experience of New South Wales how to remedy the state of affairs in Queensland. There were many small agricultural lines on which, if they could get a cheaper form of transit, it would result in greater revenue to the Railway Department.

Mr. HARTLEY: There is nothing wrong with the principle.

Mr. MOORE: What was wrong?

Mr. HARTLEY: You want a new set of engineers at the head of the railway staff.

Mr. MOORE: If the Commissioner was allowed a free hand, and was not interfered with in his operations, there would be a great improvement. The Arbitration Court could step in and tell him he must take a man off a certain job and put him on to something else, and this resulted in loss. He thought the position was becoming impossible for the Commissioner. What hope had the Commissioner of carrying on the railways successfully? If the Commissioner put a suitable man on to a particular class of work, that man should be kept on at that work.

Mr. RIORDAN: He might be a Commissioner's pet, and have the pick of the jobs.

Mr. MOORE: When a man was responsible for the running of the Railway Department, he should have full control.

Mr. HARTLEY: He has full control. Some of the engineers have full control, and they make a mess of it.

Mr. MOORE: The Railway Economy Board, which was appointed to inquire into the working of the department, made certain recommendations with regard to overtime at Maryborough, but the Parliamentary representative knocked it on the head, and the old system had to be reverted to. They should give the Commissioner full power to carry on the railways and not let him be interfered with in the management either by the unions or the Arbitration Court.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The Railway Economy Board had toured the various railway lines inquiring into matters and had drawn up a report, but he understood that it had been squashed by the caucus. If that was not political interference, he did not know what was. If they wanted to improve the railway service, they must carry it on in a business-like way, and great importance

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ought to be attached to the report of the Economy Board. The Cabinet decided on a certain policy, which did not please Labour members, who squashed the whole thing in caucus. He did not say the Railway Department wanted the pruning knife; all he knew was that the Government which had appointed an Economy Board to do certain things would not allow the report of the board to see the light of day because of political influence. It had been said that the board could bring about a saving of £250,000 in the department. The running of the department reminded him of a fruit farm run by two men, one of whom did all the work while the other man just sold the fruit, leaving his partner to struggle with all the difficulties. The Railway Commissioner was left by the Government to do all the dirty work. If anything went wrong, it was the heads of the department who were to blame; but, if anything good was accomplished, the credit was taken by the Government. Until they established things on a business footing, they could not expect the Railway Department to succeed.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Do you mean that every branch line should be made to pay?

Mr. CORSER: When he said that the railways should be placed on a business footing, an ordinary man would have understood what he meant. There was a matter which he would like to bring under the notice of the Minister. There used to be stacks of coal at the railway stations, such as Maryborough and Toowoomba, but those stacks seemed now to be practically depleted. The big stacks of coal which used to stand at the different stations reflected credit on the department's business policy.

They were asked in this vote to grant £153,635 for fuel, as against £130,000 last year. There might be a strike in the coal industry, and the coalminers would not like to see their families neglected in [3.30 p.m.] the way of the transport of food.

He knew the Government would not want them to lift the coal during a time of strike, and it was always a safeguard to have an amount of coal on hand.

Mr. BRENNAN: There will be no more strikes with the Arbitration Court.

Mr. CORSER: The Arbitration Court had not settled all strikes. As a matter of fact, to a great extent it was responsible for the trouble the Railway Department was in. If they asked somebody else to fix the wages, they should have these safeguards.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): He had a case which the Minister should deal with on its merits. The hon. gentleman had complained that certain letters had been received from the Opposition practically ignoring the Commissioner. It was a recognised fact that the Minister, under the present system, was above the Commissioner. On one occasion he wished to obtain figures in connection with railway freights, and he approached the Commissioner, and he was practically accused of going behind the Minister's back. The Commissioner told him he would obtain the figures, but it would be necessary to submit them to the Minister. While there was a Minister, it was necessary to approach him, or hon. members would be accused of ignoring him and going behind his back to obtain information. They did not recognise that the Minister had greater knowledge than the Commissioner, but they recognised that the

Minister was nominally the head of the department for the time being, and it was only courteous to approach him for any information they desired. The case he referred to was that of Frederick Moore, a late employee on the railway line from Miles to Juandah. He was a married man with a wife and nine children. He was recently dismissed from the Railway Department, and a few days afterwards a lad, aged nineteen years, named Ross, was put in his place to work in the same gang as his father, which, he understood, was against the regulations in connection with railway work. He believed the father of Ross was a very good man at his work, but he had only a wife and this one son. The ages of the nine children belonging to Moore ranged from a few weeks up to nineteen years. The two eldest boys were engaged milking a few cows which were loaned to them by neighbours, and they sent the cream to the Miles butter factory. Inquiries were made as to whether the father possessed land or cattle and was really engaged in the industry of dairying. It was proved to the satisfaction of all concerned that the man was not engaged in the dairying industry. The biggest cheque the sons had ever received amounted to less than £13 for a month. The president of the union in that locality was a Mr. Wallbank, who was also secretary of the Workers' Political Organisation. He and Moore had a dispute; also Moore joined the Primary Producers' Union. A number of letters appeared in the Press in Toowoomba, both Wallbank and Moore making accusations against each other. Wallbank threatened he would secure Moore's dismissal, and evidently he was successful. Moore accused Wallbank of having written to the Premier and enlisted his support. He (Mr. Morgan) had gone into the matter fully. There was no cause for complaint in respect of Moore's work. The lad who had been put on in his place was not strong enough for the work, and had obtained sick leave for a certain period. From information he had received in the locality, the particular length he was on was in a disgraceful condition. He had a letter containing full information, which he would be pleased to hand to the Minister. He wanted to know whether this man had been victimised. The Primary Producers' Union had taken up the matter and wanted to know the reason for the man's dismissal. Had he been victimised because he happened to belong to the Primary Producers' Union?

Mr. COLLINS: Is he a primary producer?

Mr. MORGAN: Station-masters and others had joined the Primary Producers' Union, which did not debar from membership anyone living in the country. That was where they obtained their strength. Moore was also a member of the Queensland Railway Union, which he had to join to obtain work.

Mr. GLEDSON: Can you tell us why he joined the Primary Producers' Union?

Mr. MORGAN: Probably because he thought he would get some good out of it. Surely the Railway Department did not debar a man from joining the Primary Producers' Union if he so desired? If that were so, any man who joined a political body that was not a labour body could not get work in the Railway Department. He knew of Government employees who had joined the Primary Producers' Union. A great number of public servants were members of the

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Primary Producers' Union. Were those men going to be dismissed?

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes, if they join the Primary Producers' Union.

Mr. MORGAN: He was very pleased he had drawn from the hon. member the statement that they were going to victimise public servants if they belonged to any other body than the Labour party. He hoped the people right throughout the country would learn that that was the position hon. gentlemen opposite took up—that the very moment a public servant joined a political party that was not associated with the Labour party he was going to be victimised and dismissed. It was a cruel shame.

The TREASURER: You know very well that, if we followed that policy, nearly every one of the heads would be dismissed.

Mr. MORGAN: Two or three hon. gentlemen had stated distinctly that those men should be dismissed. He supposed he need not go any further with this particular case. He had struck the nail upon the head—that the reason the man had been dismissed was because he was a member of the Primary Producers' Union.

He also wanted to draw the attention of the Minister and the Commissioner to the fact that the people in the country did not receive the treatment they deserved in respect of carriages. Those who travelled the furthest had the most uncomfortable carriages, while the people living round the cities had all the comforts and luxuries. He had travelled in a train last Monday from Dalby to Miles.

Mr. BRENNAN: Did you shift those cattle?

Mr. MORGAN: There was absolutely no truth whatever in the suggestion about shifting cattle. The leader of the Opposition knew he could not leave the House. He had received a wire from his home on the Friday stating that there was no necessity for him to go home, that everything was quite satisfactory. He wanted to refer to these carriages. He got into the train at Toowoomba on Monday morning and travelled as far as Miles. It was all right as far as Dalby. There were on the train three long carriages with both first and second class compartments. One carriage contained one first class and one second class lavatory. Another carriage contained the same. The third carriage contained two first class and two second class lavatories. When the train got to Dalby the carriages that contained the two first class lavatories and the two second class lavatories were taken off, leaving the other old one on. He spoke to the station-master about it from a feeling of duty towards the travellers on the train, but no notice was taken of his request. It was all very well for people in the suburbs to make a joke of it, but on long-distance trains it made a tremendous difference, especially to women and children. These were things that counted with the country people, but apparently the country people did not count with the Government. He hoped that those who were responsible for making up trains would see that the country people got a fair deal and not all the bumps.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): If the hon. member for Pittsworth would give the names of men who had been victimised at Toowoomba, he (Mr. Brennan) would give the names of men on the other side who had been victimised. They had men in Toowoomba who were not competent to do their work, who never thought of voting for Labour, but he could not dare use his influence with the Economy Board with a view to getting them dealt with. If the Economy Board were out to wipe out the lower paid men, then, he said, after their work was done there was no room for them. The hon. member for Burnett just now asked to have the report of the Economy Board laid on the table, and such a request could only be made for the purpose of retrenching something like 3,000 men.

Mr. CORSER: No.

Mr. BRENNAN: If it was put on the table and there was going to be victimisation of the ordinary worker—not the heads of departments, not the men who were responsible for the buildings at Mayne Junction—if it affected the under-dog, he would have some more to say about it. The Government had done some good work with the heads, but more could be dealt with. It was no use hon. members opposite pretending that they were friends of the workers. One could see in their arguments that they wanted to get a chance to wipe the ordinary worker out of the railways.

The hon. member for Burnett said there were no coal heaps now. They did not need them, because arbitration had given them security against strikes. The worker had become more satisfied. The hon. member knew that, if the Opposition got into power, they would abolish the Arbitration Court, which would affect bank clerks, police magistrates, and many others. Hon. members might bring individual cases of political influence, but they knew very well in their hearts and souls that the heads of the departments were against the Labour party to-day. Some of them thought that the Government were on the rocks, and they were getting very cheeky; but, when they saw that the credit of the Government was restored by the American loan, they found out their mistake. The Commissioner for Railways was not interfered with by the Government. He was always very courteous to him (Mr. Brennan), but, if he said, "Brennan, I think that is not right," he did not push his claim to the point of using political influence.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Will the hon. member proceed to discuss the question before the Committee?

Mr. BRENNAN: Hon. members opposite brought in the case of Todhunter, a conductor of one of the mail trains. What did it matter whether he was on the South-Western or North Coast line? Members were getting to very small matters when they brought up such things as that. If he had a case, he could go to the union and get it fixed up. Parliament was too big for that sort of thing, or should be too big. The Government, at any rate, were out to deal with big, broad principles, but hon. members opposite brought up small personal matters in order to try to get a few votes. The farmer to-day was prepared to take 3s. a bushel for his wheat, although last year he got 8s., and the Government party, which included only three or four farming constituency members, voted as a whole for that guarantee of 8s. (Opposition interjections.)

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The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Are you going to grow wheat this year? (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: He could plainly see that hon. members opposite were not prepared to give him a fair hearing because they were annoyed at his remarks.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): It was customary to have stacks of coal at different places as a standby in case of industrial trouble, and it seemed to him that it would be a good thing, in view of the number of strikes they had had recently, if the Government adopted that policy for the future. It was only within the last few weeks, for instance, that there had been a strike in the Government coalmine at Baralaba. No doubt, the same policy of the Government would supply the reason for the short supplies at Maryborough which had been mentioned.

He would like to know whether anything had been done with reference to the lighting of the Dalby station, which had a very long platform with one light similar to a slush lamp. There had been one fatal accident there already. The Western mail train arrived at 5 o'clock in the morning, when in winter it was dark, and other trains at half-past 9 or 10 o'clock at night. The place was either in darkness or the light was so bad that it was impossible for people to get about the platform without bumping into goods or other passengers. Dalby had recently installed electric light, and one of the reasons why the council were induced to go in for the scheme was that the Railway Department was going to be one of their principal consumers. The Commissioner had told him that they were short of funds, but he hoped that the matter would be regarded as a necessary improvement and not be considered as of a parochial nature.

He agreed with the hon. member for Murilla about the want of conveniences on the Western trains. To his mind it was disgraceful that any long-distance train should be without sufficient lavatory accommodation.

He noticed that in the locomotive workshops at Ipswich there was a falling off in staff from seventy-four to sixty-nine, and in the civil engineering branch from twenty-four to twenty-three, whilst wages in the locomotive workshops were decreasing from £256,000 to £220,000. He supposed that the locomotive workshops had control of the engines. They were constantly suffering from delays caused by late trains. Only that morning at Dalby he was fifty-seven minutes standing on the platform for the Western mail, and he ventured to say that during the last six weeks it had averaged more than fifteen minutes late, although it was a mail train, which one would expect to run up to time. They used to be told that the late running was caused by water trouble, but now they were told that it was caused by the engines. If that was so—and he was told it was—it was strange that the locomotive department was cutting down hands and reducing wages. That, to his mind, was false economy. No doubt they would be told that the Country party was the "low wage party" and wished for economy and to cut down the staff generally. They did not want to do that. They wanted an efficient staff, and to see fair value for a good day's pay;

they did not want to see two men doing one man's job. If the trouble lay in the engines, that was the department where they should be putting men on in order that they might be placed in workable order. On the other hand, if the Government were economising in that direction, they were economising in a way which would prevent their lives from earning the revenue which they ought to earn.

He would like to refer to the matter already mentioned by the hon. member for Pittsworth, and that was what [9 p.m.] was proposed to be done with the Toowoomba yards, where he understood some £27,000 had been expended on the eve of the last election.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must discuss that matter on the Loan Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: He thought that, perhaps, the civil engineering branch would have something to do with the carrying on of the public policy with respect to the yards, and the Minister would be able to tell them what would be the fate of those works or that part of the works that had been completed. He thought he would be perfectly justified in asking what was the policy of the engineering branch with regard to the Willowburn yards.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fitzroy*): It was rather remarkable to hear the leader and the deputy leader of the Country party pleading for an efficient service, and blaming the Government for undue interference with the staff of the Commissioner and the Commissioner himself, thereby bringing about an inefficient service. Both hon. members, in their advice to the Minister in regard to coal stacks, confessed their utter inability even to grasp the first principle of efficient management. The hon. member for Burnett remarked upon the disappearance of the large stacks of coal that formerly used to be seen at Maryborough, and he was supported in that by the leader of the Opposition, who also thought that large stacks of coal should be kept at big railway centres. There was no greater proof of absolute inefficiency than for any undertaking to accumulate big stacks of coal in any place, because it was a well-known fact that, by exposure to the weather, the quality of the coal and the coal itself deteriorated, and that stacks of coal that had been exposed for some six months would lose from 10 per cent. to, in extreme cases, 20 per cent., yet hon. members opposite had instanced that as one of the shortcomings of the Government in not putting the railways on a sound business footing. Hon. members opposite wanted to continue that old bad system of their Government of putting big quantities of coal on the ground beside the line so that it would deteriorate with the weather.

Mr. CORSER: Men who knew their work decided to do that, and provided yards.

Mr. HARTLEY: He did not know that that affected the position. In the olden days, when they were short of appliances and had not the same facilities for erecting proper coal storage bins that they had now, there might have been some excuse for dumping coal on the ground and in loading it in the way they did load it at that time; but now that they had the overhead bins sufficient provision was made for the require-

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ments of each railway centre, and there was no doubt there was a big saving in that respect.

He would refer to another matter which applied not only to the management of the railways, but to the management of any big business concern. They could not be managed unless one had an up-to-date and efficient staff, and it could not be efficiently managed unless one had the full co-operation of the whole of the staff. That was what they had not got in the Railway Department to-day. The present system prevented them from getting the best efficiency, and the big obstacle in obtaining the best efficiency in all ranks from the lad cleaner right up to the Commissioner was the system of promotion by seniority. No big business firm or up-to-date firm based the appointment of its officers on seniority alone. The leading qualification and the best qualification was adaptability, training, and knowledge to fill a position that might be vacant. That was one reason why the railway service was not as efficient as it might be, although, when everything was taken into consideration, there was nothing that could be said detrimentally about the Queensland railways as compared with other Australian railways. They had not yet got a system in Australia of rewarding merit and the desire on the part of an artisan, workman, or officer to promote the best interests of the service in which he was engaged. That was one of the real troubles.

They had an illustration of that in the Commissioner's report on the Inventions and Suggestions Board. He (Mr. Hartley) considered, in the first place, that the board was wrongly formed. It had only one representative of the employees, and the rest were heads of departments, and, with all respect to the men who had filled those positions in the past, unless they kept themselves up to date and studied the most up-to-date methods in their own State and other States and countries, they could not do justice to the positions they were in and were not qualified to be members of the board.

There should be two boards dealing with inventions and suggestions. There should be a preliminary board of inquiry in the department where the employee was engaged, and where the suggestion for the improvement or the invention was to apply, and, when that board had dealt with the matter, it should go to the supreme board, on which the employees' interests should be represented. If they did that, he was satisfied the position would not be as was disclosed in the Commissioner's report. There were 462 suggestions received from the staff, of which twenty-four were adopted and thirty-three were given a trial. That was a very low percentage. It did not matter how cranky some of the suggestions might be. There were cranks in every walk of life. He thought there were cranks on the Opposition benches, and probably a few on the Government side of the Committee. (Opposition laughter.) When a man was a crank in some particular direction, he thought his idea was the best, and was absolutely reliable, until it was demonstrated to him that it was not. For the life of him, he could not believe that out of 462 suggestions only 3 per cent. were at all practicable. Further than that, twenty-four were adopted, and sixteen bonuses were given as rewards to the people who proffered those suggestions. Fancy that, in

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a big department like the railways, with this vote alone running into nearly £3,000,000! Fancy such wonderful liberality to zealous workmen who had spent a great deal of time and money, and possibly studied and worked hard in their own time to perfect some improvement in the railway service—it might be some improvement on a carriage or an engine! For those sixteen suggestions the total amount of reward was £50, which was absolutely absurd. The policy should be that for every suggestion that was considered worthy of attention there should be a certain reward; if it was decided to give it a trial or if it was worthy of a trial, there should be a still further reward; if it was adopted, though it subsequently turned out not to be serviceable, there should be a still further reward; and, if it was finally adopted by the department, a higher reward still. He was quite satisfied that, if that were done, there would be greater and many more useful improvements in the railway service, both in the shops and on the trains, than at the present time. The main objection to the board as at present constituted was that there were officers who were opposed, though not consciously opposed, but opposed by their dispositions, to any alteration in the system that had prevailed up to the present time. It was the attitude of some of the older servants in almost any department to say, "It has been good enough for the last thirty years. Let it go! We do not want to bother with it." It was time that they encouraged some of the young zealous men—the mechanics, the experts, the civil engineers, and the draftsmen—in every possible way to give the very best of their training, their skill, and their brains to the department. They would not do that if they followed the present course. Take the position of a lad serving his apprenticeship. He attended the Technical College, and went through the various courses of engineering, learning mechanical drawing, machine construction, and all the theory that he could not learn while working in the shop, until he became a thoroughly qualified engineer. What encouragement was there for him when he became qualified? He simply had to drift on week after week doing practically the same work in the shop until someone ahead of him died. There was no encouragement to him to improve. He was up against a dead wall all the time. The present Inventions and Suggestions Board did not connote efficiency. He would give a very pointed illustration of how the railway system in the times past treated suggestions for improvements. When he first became a member of Parliament, he knew a very keen boiler-maker, who was thoroughly skilled, and who had an invention for removing tubes from a boiler. He showed it to him, and it looked all right. He said, "All right, we will get a trial from the Commissioner." The Commissioner at that time was the late Mr. Evans.

He stipulated with the inventor that the invention should be protected by patent, and he asked the Commissioner what he would be prepared to pay the [9.15 p.m.] man for the invention. The Commissioner said, "We will not pay him anything. It does not belong to him; it is the property of the Railway Commissioner." He was given to understand that there was a departmental rule to the effect that an invention by a railway employee was the property of

the Commissioner, and that the man was not entitled to a reward for it. They negotiated for a price. The invention was reported on by the foreman in the shop, who favoured it. They tried to get a reward, but the Commissioner was not prepared to grant it. The matter dragged on for four or five years. He said at one time to the Commissioner that he would recommend the man to put his patent in the fire, as nothing would come out of it; but, fortunately, the man got into touch with a civil engineer, after which the patent was adopted, and the man got a fair monetary reward. It showed what a defective system was in operation in the railway service when it took all that time to get put into operation a tool which was working very well at the present time and saving a large amount of money in the preservation of the tubes of the boiler, and reducing the time in which the boilers might be repaired.

He drew attention to the following paragraph in the Commissioner's report—

"Of the thirty class 'C17' engines, the construction of which was distributed evenly between the Ipswich shops, Messrs. Walkers Limited, and Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan, six have been completed at Ipswich, ten by Messrs. Walkers Limited, and two by Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan, leaving twelve still to be supplied. Further contracts for thirty have been arranged with Messrs. Walkers Limited, and six with Messrs. Evans, Anderson, and Phelan."

He would like to know whether the Government were handing over the work of building locomotives to outside contractors.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No.

Mr. HARTLEY: He was pleased to know that. Surely they ought to be able to construct more than six locomotives a year at the Government workshops at Ipswich, which was as up to date as any shop in Queensland. While the workmen at the Ipswich workshops were on short time, it seemed strange that Walkers Limited, and Evans, Anderson, and Phelan should be building locomotives.

He wanted to draw the attention of the leader of the Opposition to the Baralaba coal. The hon. member evidently attributed the disappearance of the coal at Maryborough to the fact that there had been a cessation of operations at Baralaba, but there had never been any coal sent from Baralaba to Maryborough, with the exception of a small trial quantity. They had enough to do to supply the requirements of the Central Division from Baralaba. He suggested that the Railway Commissioner should have his own coalmines on the Styx River and the Central Railway. A good deal of experimental work and careful mining of the Baralaba coal would be required before it became an efficient railway coal.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: It is a very fine coal.

Mr. HARTLEY: It was a very fine heating coal, but rather tricky; and they wanted a coal for the railway engines which would burn easily and with as little trouble as possible.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): A big vote like this should call forth some criticism from the leader of the Opposition, but it

was astonishing to think that the leader of the Opposition should spend his time discussing a light on the Dalby platform and the taking off of a carriage from a train at Dalby. It seemed to him that the Railway Department was either all right, or that the Opposition had not been paying much attention to the department; he thought that in the majority of cases the department was all right. They found the hon. member for Murilla discussing the dismissal of a "cocky" lengthsmen. They could not understand how a lengthsmen could be a member of the Primary Producers' Union, as they had understood that that was an industrial union covering only primary producers. They now found that it was a political union.

He would remind the Minister that there were ten boys who had passed the apprentices' examination for admission to the Ipswich workshops, but were not admitted, although they had been notified that they would be admitted. He appealed to the Minister to reconsider these cases. Surely they had enough faith in their railway system to put on all the apprentices it could carry, even if at the end of their apprenticeship the foreman said that they could not employ them as journeymen. The mechanical engineering apprentices, as soon as they were out of their time at the Ipswich workshops, were taken on by private engineering firms. The railway service was not so flush in the matter of competent engineers, and he doubted the wisdom of allowing these bright brains to leave the department. These boys, who had won their place by 5 per cent. of inspiration and 95 per cent. of perspiration, should be kept in the department, as they would be useful to the State. If they wanted a good engineering staff they ought to retain the boys whom they trained; but, if they were to be allowed to go away when they had served their apprenticeship, they should still train other apprentices. If they could train mechanical engineers for the benefit of the State, they could also train fitters, moulders, and blacksmiths for the service of the State.

He wanted further investigations to be made into the matter of repairs to rolling-stock. He was informed that it was no uncommon sight in the Ipswich workshops to see carriages go out with a placard on them "Loaned to traffic." They were fixed up so that they would just run one trip, and then have to be brought back to be repaired. He thought there was now an opportunity—through the slackness of traffic—to make the repairs that were necessary. When the Minister was speaking, a question was raised about a train which could not get through a tunnel, or could only get through after very great pressure. He did not know whether the fault was with the tunnel or with the train; but he would ask members of the Opposition who they were going to recommend for dismissal—the man who built the tunnel fifty years ago, the engineer or draftsman who designed the carriage that could not go through the tunnel, or the driver that could not take it through? If the Minister designed the carriages, he would say, "Sack the Minister"; but, if there was any fault in the carriages, the Minister should see that the person who was responsible for it was brought to book. Certain people had a tendency to get into a groove, and discerning people had to see that they did not get into those grooves. He knew of some

Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

churches which changed their ministers round.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Only when they hear a call. (Laughter.)

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Many were called, but few chosen. (Laughter.) He thought it would be an effective system if they had a circuit on the railways, and periodically shifted their shop foremen and workshop foremen round the State. Possibly they would get better service, get these men out of the grooves, and give all the foremen a

big knowledge of all the work of [9.30 p.m.] the railways. He had found in

the Ipswich workshops a disinclination to do the best, chiefly on the part of the heads. Hon. members would not believe with what ease they slipped back from a position they had taken up. Some little thing recommended by them and turned down seemed to be sufficient excuse for dropping the whole business. That should not be so. If a foreman were told a certain thing could not be done in a certain way, he took it as a general instruction on all things and let the whole thing slide. It was wonderful what they could do with the small fry and not with the big. He remembered taking to the Commissioner the case of a boy apprentice who went to three race meetings to earn an honest crust by selling race books. The Commissioner dismissed the lad because he did that. He tried to get the Commissioner to give the boy another opportunity, but he would not do so. At the very same time, and for some number of years, a man in a high position in the service was getting every second Thursday off to be a steward at a race meeting. The differential treatment was remarkable, the only difference being that the man in the high position used to go to his boss and ask for the afternoon off.

Mr. STOPFORD: Perhaps he gave his boss a tip.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He got only a sovereign for his services for the afternoon, and there would not be much left if he gave a tip. He could assure hon. members that the stewards on amateur turf clubs did not bet. What puzzled him was why the severe treatment that was meted out to the boy was not meted out to a man in a responsible position. He did not want that treatment to be meted out to the man, but he thought the boy might have got the same opportunity as a grown man in the service.

He wanted to know something about how they were dealing with the work in the workshops. Was it paying? Were they comparing decently and favourably with outside work? They had an excellent opportunity of comparing prices in the matter of the erection of some new locomotives at the Ipswich workshops and others which had been built for them at Maryborough. The conditions up to a certain point, he believed, had been equal. He wanted to know whether the conditions were equal. He believed that, if they favoured anybody, they favoured Walkers Limited very much. He believed that Walkers Limited had the very first call upon all material procurable, and that the first material that came to hand went to them. That was a big consideration; they did not have their jobs hanging on their hands. He believed that by getting their material early they enjoyed the advantage of having to pay a lower wage, because the Arbitration Court award went up considerably by the time the Ipswich engines were

started to be built. He believed that by getting the first material, Walkers Limited got it through the Customs for a lesser duty than had to be paid in respect of the later material which had to be used on the engines being built in the Ipswich workshops. If that were so, the Maryborough firm had a very material advantage in the matter of material, in the matter of wages, and in the matter of duty upon the material. If the Ipswich engines had come out anywhere near the Maryborough engines, if they had beaten the Maryborough engines in the matter of price, it was greatly to the credit of everyone concerned—the draftsmen, the men in charge, and the men themselves. If it were not, some investigation should be made. He hoped the Minister had the figures. These things ought to be finalised by this time, and the people ought to know whether Ipswich had come out with advantage in that matter. If it had, he would be very pleased to hear it. He believed it had, because he believed the work turned out of the Ipswich workshops was just as good, and in many respects better than any done outside. He believed the workers did as good, and in many respects a better job than workers in outside shops. He knew they had produced a superior article, because the engine drivers who drove the locomotives told him the Ipswich engine was better than the Maryborough engine—it hauled a better load, and hauled it more easily. If the price were better—as he believed it was and as he believed it ought to be—it showed that their workshops were doing a better service to the State than were outside firms. He very much regretted that there was any occasion to have engines built by outside firms. He did not say they should not give them to those firms. He believed the department was in serious need of engines, and they had to have them built with all expedition.

He wanted to say a word or two upon the most vexed question of seniority versus efficiency. He did not think there could be any question but that efficiency should count; on all occasions the efficient man should get the job. The unfortunate position was that it was somewhat difficult to decide upon efficiency. Supposing that a senior man left the service, if the next in charge was not the most efficient man, what had he been doing there all that time? That was the argument that was always used in the matter of seniority and efficiency. He believed they should stand for efficiency. He stood for it. He believed they should have some board or some method of deciding who was the efficient man, and that positions should be filled by the most efficient men available.

Mr. COSTELLO: The agitator gets the job now.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: There was a very large field for an agitator on the Opposition side to agitate those people to be of the one mind and the one heart. He had never come across such a divided body in his life. To-day they said that what was hampering the Railways Department was the fact that it had to pay Arbitration Court awards. They said, "Wipe away the court, do away with awards, and let the department run without them."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That is an incorrect statement.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: One of the main planks of their platform was arbitration.

[Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

They had no cohesion. If they were an engine upon the railways, how soon would they be smashed? They had no connecting rod. The only thing they had was a safety valve, and they all seemed to be sitting upon it. He wanted to stress the fact of the apprentices and the repairing of the rolling stock. The department should take every opportunity to see that the rolling stock was put into proper repair at the present time, when no great demand was being made upon it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): The motor-cars were a very big convenience to the suburbs of Toowoomba and the districts surrounding Toowoomba. Even if the department were losing on them, there were other lines on which losses were being made. Possibly the Cleveland line and many suburban lines were not doing any better. He thought they could be extended in the direction of picking up cream and other things.

The hon. member for Burnett spoke about large stocks of coal which had disappeared. Would the Minister tell them where their stocks of boiler plates and boiler tubes that were in the Ipswich workshops when the present Government came into power in 1914 were now. He admitted that it had been very difficult to get them. He thought the Minister would find there was a difference of many thousands of pounds.

Regarding employment, no business could be properly managed and prosper unless it was able to employ its own employees. So far as lengthmen were concerned, if there were a vacancy on a length to-morrow the first man on the Labour Bureau list would get it. Was it a fair thing to pick up a swagman off the road and put him on the railway, practically speaking, in charge of the lives of thousands of people? (Government interruption.) He would give a case. Sometime ago a vacancy occurred near Gatton. A returned soldier who had been a lengthman before he went to the war and who had earned some of the greatest honours on the field of battle, was told when he made application that he would have to take his chance with the first man on the list at the Labour Bureau. He (Mr. Bebbington) went to the Railway Department and was told that that was correct. He went to the Labour Bureau, and the head of the Bureau told him it was correct, but added that, because this man was a returned soldier and had earned the Military Medal, some little difference might be made in his case.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It is not correct.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He said it was correct.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You would say anything.

At 9.40 p.m.,

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

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did not agree with what the Minister said. It was correct. This man was told distinctly that he must put his name down on the list at the Labour Bureau, and the man whose name was first down on the list would get it. How could they expect the Commissioner to manage a business like that, when he was compelled to take into his service the first tramp who came along? To endanger the lives and

property of people in that way was a perfect scandal. The engineers at Maryborough put some men on without consulting the Labour Bureau, and, as the Minister knew, there was a big row about it and the whole thing was turned upside down. If the Minister denied the facts in this case, he would go with him to the Railway Department and see the officers from whom he had made inquiry. He would also go with him to the head of the Labour Bureau and they would see the thing through. The Commissioner had not the control he ought to have. Many lad porters were controlling the business instead of the station-master. If the station-master reported them, he was told not to be so officious. Very likely he was moved somewhere else. The Commissioner was not backed up in his authority. He practically occupied the position of a boy. He was of opinion, with other members, that as many apprentices as possible should be taught in the railway workshops. A business man had the right to have his son trained as a farmer at Gatton College; why should not the farmer have a similar right to have his son trained as an engineer in the Ipswich shop?

The HOME SECRETARY: Why do they not go on the land?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The land was a good place for the other fellow. The full number of apprentices should be trained in the shops. It was well known that a great many of the engineers and artisans required to-day were foreigners. They were dying out here and apprentices were not coming on, and in a very short time they would have to bring foreigners here to fill the bulk of their positions. There seemed to be a tendency to make the professions and trades close corporations for the benefit of the few people interested in them; but, when apprentices were trained, even if they could not employ them all themselves, they would be assets to the State. The unemployed to-day were practically all untrained men.

The HOME SECRETARY: Are they?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A good many of them were. If a farmer wanted twenty men to do harvesting, he had to get 100 before he could pick out twenty fit for the job. The training of men was not fitting them for the services for which they were required.

Mr. BELL (*Fassifern*): One hon. member advocated that more locomotives should be constructed at the Ipswich workshops, whilst the hon. member for Bremer said that some of them were sent out with placards on them, "Loaned to traffic," and had to be sent back immediately after the trip for repairs, which, he took it, was a condemnation of the management of the shops, which he understood were very well equipped, and capable of turning out splendid work, although it was always understood that it was of a very costly nature; so much so that they had been looked upon as a white elephant and unable to turn out work at a cost that would compare with that of any well-organised private concern. The hon. member for Bremer also mentioned carriages which, on their first trip, hit the tunnels and were damaged. That was a very severe condemnation of the policy of the department.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Bremer did not say that. It is not correct.

Mr. Bell.]

Mr. BELL: He would like to raise his voice in recommending that more consideration should be given to country lines in the matter of accommodation and conveniences. The country districts were being starved, while the city electorates and suburban areas got a great deal more consideration. On his own line to Boonah they had great trouble a few weeks back in getting an extra carriage. Twenty-five years ago the services on some of their country lines were better than they were to-day; they were retrogressing. He thought that was largely a matter of organisation. They had plenty of trains, but the time tables might be made more convenient for the people, who now had to sacrifice their time to the Railway Department, who gave them no consideration at all.

With reference to the Kalbar-Mount Edwards line, an engine was unable to turn at Kalbar, and had to go several miles further on. That showed pretty bad management, and very great inconvenience was caused from the lack of facilities. The line to Mount Edwards should be completed. The earthworks were being washed away, and, generally, they were losing the benefit of what work had been done. The Minister told them that he could not see his way clear to finish the line, but hoped that, if the Government were successful in floating a loan, a small portion would be earmarked for it. He hoped the Minister would take some notice of what he had said and endeavour to improve the services on their country lines.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Lacombe, *Keppel*): With regard to the suggestion of the hon. member for Aubigny in regard to the use of rail motors, they did not need to go to New South Wales for experience, because they had had actual experience in Queensland, and it had not been satisfactory.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It was a case of the hon. member rushing in where angels feared to tread. On the Cooktown system, when he was there, men were in charge who were able to effect repairs quickly, but otherwise the trials that had been made had not proved as satisfactory as was expected, and that was the reason why the department desired to make trials of small steam cars.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why is it that a woman can run a motor-car on a road and you cannot run one on the railways?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member was constantly objecting to what he termed interference, but he wanted now to interfere with the engineers of the railway service in matters of working. The hon. member made some long, passionate, rambling statement about interference with the Commissioner in the employment of labour, and said that the man first on the list, even if he were a tramp from Timbuctoo, should be employed before a competent workman. That was a ridiculous statement. The engineers, with Cabinet approval, had now authority to engage serviceable, suitable labour.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How long since?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member may have had a particular case in which it was otherwise, but he might have been misinformed. So far as practi-

[*Mr. Bell.*

able, it was the policy of the department to engage labour from the Labour Bureau, and, as far as possible, in order of seniority and efficiency.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The first on the list.

At 9.58 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The officers were not bound down to that rule at all. They went to the bureau and selected labour in conjunction with the labour agent.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And the engineers get hauled over the coals about it.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member came there with some long, rambling statement which was not based on fact. At any rate, he was not stating what was happening now. He might be going back three or five years.

The hon. member for Burnett referred to coal stacks which used to be kept at different places. The hon. member wanted him to exercise political influence. The departmental officers who were responsible for [10 p.m.] ascertaining the coal supplies for the ensuing year made their recommendations and secured the money that was required. It was absurd to have that coal lying idle and money invested in it when it was bound to deteriorate. The margin of safety was ascertained by the departmental officers, and they were allowed what supplies they required. Surely there was no further information necessary. Did the hon. member want to tell the departmental officers what they should do in that particular matter? The hon. member for Pittsworth referred to a question of political influence. The worst case of political influence was one that came from the hon. member's party. He had dealt with that on a previous occasion. He had been asked to override the Commissioner's decision on the report of the Economy Board regarding gatekeepers. That board made certain recommendations regarding gatekeepers; these recommendations were carried out; and then a protest was made to him by the Country party with a request that he should override the Commissioner's decision in the matter.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Aubigny mentioned the case of the employment of railway employee Todhunter. He said that in that case outside influence had stepped in and compelled the Commissioner to employ Todhunter when he did not want to. The Arbitration Court did not deal with that matter at all; it was dealt with by the departmental officers. They had the deputy leader of the Country party—a man holding that responsible position—making that untruthful statement. It was a serious matter that the department should be subjected to criticism of that nature. How could the hon. member make such a ridiculous and unfounded statement? A good deal of the criticism urged against the Government was as untruthful and ridiculous as what he had just mentioned. Hon. members should ascertain the facts upon which to base criticism, and not base it upon absurd stories as had been done by the hon. member for Aubigny.

With regard to the complaints about carriages, that was a matter which came

under the jurisdiction of the departmental officers. He had not heard the complaints which had been made that evening, but the matter would be inquired into.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: You have not done much travelling.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had done a great deal of travelling.

Mr. VOWLES: In your own special carriage.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He had travelled in second-class carriages more frequently than the hon. member, and he appreciated the difficulties the Railway Department had to contend with.

Mr. VOWLES: In the previous Government's time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Things were in a deplorable state then. The second-class carriages to-day were as good as the first-class carriages in those days. He had travelled in second-class carriages in country districts at the back of Rockhampton, and, if the hon. member knew the services that prevailed under the Tory Administrations, they would realise how little cause there was for complaint under the present Government.

Mr. CORSER: You are only exaggerating.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Dalby mentioned the light on the Dalby railway station. If they could get the electric lighting system installed at a reasonable cost, they should adopt that system; but it was not likely to be adopted during the currency of the financial year unless there was some change which could not be foreseen at present. The matter would come up for early consideration. Special inquiry would be made regarding the statements made by the hon. member for Dalby.

Mr. VOWLES: Send it to Mr. Smith, the station-master.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would send along the remarks by the hon. member as contained in "Hansard" for report. The hon. member for Murilla had said that a man named Moore had been victimised. He had not the details with him, but he would have them to-morrow. If he recollected rightly, the Primary Producers' Union had written concerning the matter. His recollection was that this man was earning money outside the Railway Department, and, when curtailment was to be effected, the men earning incomes outside the department went before the men who were not earning outside incomes.

Mr. MORGAN: What about the boy only nineteen years of age, who was an only son?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: His recollection was that that Moore received an income from an outside source. It was a remarkable thing that Moore was a member of the Primary Producers' Union. There was some correspondence from the Primary Producers' Union on this matter.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did not that indicate that Moore received income outside the department?

Mr. MORGAN: No. Any railway man can become a member of the Primary Producers' Union.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No member was going to join two unions and pay two fees when one would protect him.

Mr. MORGAN: A number of station-masters are members of the Primary Producers' Union.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Bremer dealt with the question of apprentices, which was an important matter, and was under consideration at the present time. During the last six months, unfortunately, there had been a shortage of funds, and there was a difficulty in carrying on the ordinary policy with regard to apprenticeship. The whole matter was under consideration, and due importance would be attached to the remarks of the hon. member for Bremer and the hon. member for Warwick.

Referring to the repair of rolling-stock, he would point out to the hon. member for Bremer that at Easter and Christmas and other holiday times every carriage fit to run was sent out into traffic even in an unpainted condition. That was the usual practice. Judging by the reports that he had received, repairs were being effected at the Ipswich workshops, and there was no necessity for any change at the present time. The matter was kept closely in touch with to see if any change was necessary at any time.

They had about fifty-five locomotives at the present time under order at Ipswich, or under order from Evans, Anderson, and Phelan, and Walkers Limited. At the present time, owing to the drop in traffic, there was not the same demand for engines as there was some months ago. They had not the same number of engines for repairs in the Ipswich workshops as they had in January last.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Are you able to get all the boiler tubes that you require, or are they still difficult to obtain?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The department had decided some time ago to effect repairs as quickly as possible, and he had received no complaints about the absence of boiler tubes. A comparison had been made of the cost of engines built at the Ipswich workshops and at Walkers Limited, and the cost was approximately the same. Ten engines built by Walkers Limited had cost £9,094 per engine, and six engines built at the Ipswich workshops had cost £9,231 per engine, which meant an excess over Walkers Limited of £137. There was a footnote to the report on the matter which stated—

"The excess of £137 is more than accounted for by the fact that the superheater material supplied by Walkers Limited cost £142 per engine less than that put into the engines at Ipswich."

The cost of engines built at Ipswich compared favourably with the cost of engines built by Walkers Limited.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Did Walkers Limited import their own material or get it from the department?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He thought that the department assisted in some way; but he was not certain of the details. The policy of the department was to have as many engines as were necessary built. Some time ago, when there was a great demand for locomotives, they had to go to

Hon. J. Larcombe.]

Walkers Limited, as they were not able to turn out enough at the Ipswich workshops. The contracts were given, and the work had to go on, and that was the reason why the men were working full time at Walkers Limited. The department had no control over the tenders that were let some time ago for the construction of locomotives. The hon. member for Fitzroy dealt with the question of the Inventions and Suggestions Board. That board had not effected all that might be expected, but initial steps had been taken, and in time it would bring about great improvement in the railway service. Other matters which had been brought up would receive consideration.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The question of outside control in the selection of employees in the railway service had been referred to, but he did not think the Minister knew very much about the conditions in regard to it. Some important work had been held up the other day because the organiser of the Australian Workers' Union claimed the right to choose men for certain jobs, in connection with the work of powder monkeys, which was a very responsible position, because the men had the handling of explosives and the firing of the shots.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the hon. member dealing with the construction vote?

Mr. SWAYNE: He was dealing with employment generally on the railways. The engineer wanted trustworthy men for those responsible positions. The work in question was hung up for a week and declared "black" because the organiser of the Australian Workers' Union was not allowed to choose the two men required for the position. The Minister had emphatically denied what the hon. member for Drayton said, so he thought it was well to tell the Committee what he knew about the matter. The officers of the department had not got a free hand in the choice of employees, as men outside the service claimed the right to pick out men for different jobs.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): The Minister had not given them any information with regard to the work being carried out at Willowburn, as he had promised.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I will give it when we get to the vote concerned.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Minister might give them the information under the heading of "extra labour and contingencies" in that vote. Unless there was something he wanted to keep dark, the hon. gentleman should give them the information. They realised that a large amount had been spent there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would point out to the hon. member for Pittsworth that, if the Minister gives the information asked for, I cannot prevent discussion on it, but the hon. member is entirely out of order. He can raise the question when we come to page 126 of the Estimates.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Minister had twitted the Opposition with having gone over the head of the Commissioner to him with regard to the gatekeepers, but they went to the hon. gentleman as a matter of courtesy. He thought the Minister would not expect them to go to the Commissioner on a matter of the policy of the Government.

[*Hon. J. Larcombe.*

It was unfair of the Minister to accuse them of trying to break down the authority of the Commissioner.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Why do you complain about political interference?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: In connection with the delivery of wheat on the Downs, it was arranged to concentrate on a particular station in order to facilitate delivery and also to expedite the work of the Railway Department, instead of delivering the wheat in small quantities at various places. There were certain gates at which there was a very small traffic, but, had the wheat been delivered at those places, the traffic would have increased so much as to entitle the department to retain the services of the gatekeepers there. In his electorate there were gates at which the services of the gatekeepers had been dispensed with, but at which their services would have been required had the wheat in that locality been delivered there. Through the Wheat Board having delivered the wheat at one station, some of the gatekeepers were out of employment. Good service was performed by the gatekeepers. Orders for trucks were left with them, which they would give to the guard of the train going to Toowoomba, and the trucks would be sent the day after, and time would thus be saved. The gatekeepers being out of employment would be within their rights in not accepting the responsibility of delivering the orders to the guards. It was necessary to have someone to look after the mail bags which were thrown out of the train, and there was nobody to look after them if the gatekeepers were not there. They had a perfect right to approach the Minister with regard to the matter. If the railways were to be run successfully, the Arbitration Court should fix wages and hours at the commencement of the financial year, as, if awards were brought in at inconvenient times, it was impossible for the Commissioner to carry out the duties imposed on him. If the money spent at Willowburn had been spent in the improvement of the platforms at some of the country stations—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member cannot discuss that matter on this vote.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He was talking about the maintenance of lines in country districts. Many of the stations there were in a deplorable condition. For instance, the one at Pittsworth, one required a step ladder to get into the carriage. The country lines were neglected, and the train service suited very few people. The department should certainly arrange the train service so as to enable the country people to get to Toowoomba in time to attend the cattle sale held there every Tuesday. People in the country were landed in Toowoomba at 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon, too late to see much of the sale. The Railway Department should reorganise the system in many of the country districts.

At 10.30 p.m.,

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

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT
AMENDMENT BILL.

SECOND READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, Cairns): I beg to move—

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

The matter has been fully discussed at the initiation stage, and there is no need to go over it again. It is a non-contentious measure, containing only two principles—provision for adoption, which we can all agree with, and the setting up of an affiliation court, from which the magistrate has the power to exclude all the public and newspaper representatives if, in his discretion, he so decides.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): I was hoping we were going to hear from the Home Secretary something with regard to the reporting of these cases in the public Press.

The HOME SECRETARY: The Bill gives power to the magistrate to exclude the Press.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Is there anything to restrict the Press in connection with the reporting of these cases? The hon. gentleman must see that that has become a menace in our midst. We have seen some newspapers parading these cases to pander to the appetites of the unthinking, and that sort of thing requires to be restricted. This seems to be an opportunity for exercising that power.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): It is generally recognised—and it is a fact—that the adoption of infants is against the law. Many people enter into an agreement with some kindly disposed person who may be prepared to take over a child under a deed of adoption. Those deeds are void, as being against public policy, and it requires a measure of this nature to legalise such arrangements. I recognise that this Bill is a move in the right direction so far as that particular matter is concerned. I dare say the hon. member for Toowoomba knows as well as I do that deeds of adoption are not recognised as legal and may be broken by the parties at any time they like. I have prepared a fair number of these deeds, and always have pointed out to the parties that the deeds practically have no legal significance. In order to insert a binding condition in the deeds it is a practice to insert a covenant that if at any time the parent wishes to retake custody of the child she has to pay a certain amount for the keep of the child during the time it has been out of her custody. That has been the only way in which an adopting party has been protected in the past. This legislation is going to get over that difficulty to a very great extent. I would like to give credit to the Registrar of Births, Marriages, and Deaths for a practice he has instituted in the department in connection with the registration of the names of infants who have been adopted. When the deed has been signed and executed a certificate of birth is granted to the child under the name mentioned in the deed. That means the certificate will be accepted, and there is no need to go into the antecedents and raise the question of whether the child is legitimate or illegitimate.

Mr. BRENNAN: They can find out by searching.

Mr. KING: Of course, they can. Take the case of an illegitimate child who has been adopted by a married couple. The deed of adoption becomes registered, the certificate

is issued to that child, and to all intents and purposes the child becomes the child of the adopting party. It is a certificate which bears the name of the people who adopt the child. We recognise that this particular practice is for the benefit of the child and the protection of its name. I hope the Bill will go through.

Question put and passed.

COMMITTEE.

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

Clauses 1, 2, and 3 put and passed.

Clause 4—“*Adoption of infants*”—

The HOME SECRETARY moved the omission of the word “Director” on line 49, and the insertion of the words “Governor in Council.” It was wiser to place on the Government the responsibility for cancelling an adoption order.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): Was it necessary to have such wide power given either to an individual or to the Governor in Council?

The HOME SECRETARY: That power must be somewhere to cancel an adoption order when it is necessary to do so. There will have to be some good ground, such as the child having been adopted by a woman who afterwards becomes undesirable.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was not making any reflection upon the Orphanage Department; he could speak only in the highest terms of the officers. He felt that, to the men who represented the Government for the time being, the clause gave a very wide power, and a dangerous one. If it were to be limited in its exercise, he was satisfied.

The HOME SECRETARY: It would be too wide a power to give to the director, so he was proposing to amend the clause to make the Government responsible. They had had cases where, before adoption took place, the adopting party was quite all right; and they had found later on that something had happened. It was a wise thing that authority should exist to enable them to take away a child from that adopted parent. The law gave them power now to take a child away from its natural parents if it were neglected.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): He would like a provision inserted that the Governor in Council could have a separate supplemental register for the registration of all illegitimate children. At the present time any person, on payment of the fee of 2s., could search the register and find out the true position with respect to an illegitimate child. If he searched for an illegitimate child's birth, he would be shown the correct name. It was unfair to the unfortunate child, who in most instances knew nothing of his or her doubtful lineage until on the eve of marriage.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I suggest that the hon. gentleman should deal with that on clause 6.

Mr. BRENNAN: He was dealing with it on clause 4, and suggested that they should insert the provision after line 48.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Home Secretary has moved an amendment on line 49.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 4, as amended, put and passed.

Mr. Brennan.]

Clause 5—“Amendment of section 16”—

The HOME SECRETARY: The hon. member for Oxley had raised the question of reporting cases. Under the clause everybody was excluded from the hearing of a case except those specially mentioned—the magistrate, the director or departmental officer, officers of the court, members of the Police Force, the respective barristers or solicitors, the mother, sister, or other relative. The proviso was inserted to give the magistrate power to admit some other person who was not specially mentioned, but whom he might find it necessary in a particular case to admit, but the intention was not to admit the Press.

Mr. VOWLES: It appeared to him that there was no power in the clause to prevent the Press from obtaining access to the depositions.

Mr. BRENNAN moved the insertion of the following new subclause, to follow line 22—

“(f) No depositions shall be available to the Press for publication unless by order of the magistrate hearing the complaint in question.”

The HOME SECRETARY: I will accept that amendment.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 6—“Amendment of section 17”—

Mr. BRENNAN: He proposed to insert a new clause, to read somewhat as follows—

“The Governor in Council may by Order in Council order a separate supplemental register to be kept by the Registrar-General for the purposes of this Act.”

They must keep records, but why should any person be able to come along and defeat a person who happened not to have been born in wedlock? He knew of two cases in each of which a girl, not knowing of her antecedents, had been about to be married, when Mother Grundy got to work, and the intended husband made a search, with the result that the marriage did not take place. They should provide that a separate register should be kept, which should not be inspected except by order of a judge or other authority trying a case in which a question of birth arose.

The HOME SECRETARY: Records must be kept, and whilst the hon. member for Toowoomba might have known of unfortunate cases, it would not do for them to destroy the value of their records. In any case, the amendment would not accomplish what it set out to accomplish, because, if a search were made in the ordinary register and the birth were not recorded there, it would be known that the person had not been registered or was in the other register.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: An attempt to conceal the truth.

Mr. BRENNAN: It was not a question of concealing the truth at all. He did not claim that the original records should not be kept, but a supplementary register should be kept also, so that the antecedents of unfortunate children might not be investigated by persons who had no concern in the matter. In most of those cases the girl or boy did not know the circumstances of their births; they were told that they were born in lawful wedlock.

[Hon. W. McCormack.

Mr. KING (Logan): He would like to mention—what the hon. member for Toowoomba seemed to have overlooked—that if a person wished personally to make a search of the register he would be required to give the exact date of birth. If he wished to make a general search to satisfy mere idle curiosity, the Registrar-General would absolutely refuse to give the information unless he was satisfied that the applicant's inquiry was *bonâ fide*, which he thought was a very good practice.

Question put and passed.

The House resumed. The CHAIRMAN reported the Bill to the House with amendments.

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

JUDGES' RETIREMENT BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Legislative Council of a message returning this Bill without amendment.

REGULATION OF SUGAR CANE PRICES ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Legislative Council of a message returning this Bill without amendment.

ANZAC DAY BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Legislative Council of a message returning this Bill without amendment.

SUPREME COURT BILL.

RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from the Legislative Council of a message returning this Bill without amendment.

The House adjourned at 11 p.m.