

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 1921

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

WEDNESDAY, 19 OCTOBER, 1921.

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF DEBATE—TWELFTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

RAILWAYS.

SOUTHERN DIVISION.

Question—“That £3,090,773 be granted for ‘Southern Division’”—put and passed.

CENTRAL DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Lacombe, *Keppel*) moved—

“That £756,680 be granted for ‘Central Division.’”

The remarks he had made in connection with the previous vote applied with equal force to the vote for the Central Division, and therefore it was not necessary for him to say any more.

Question put and passed.

NORTHERN DIVISION.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Lacombe, *Keppel*) moved—

“That £1,040,676 be granted for ‘Northern Division.’”

Mr. GREEN (Townsville): He wished to make a few remarks in regard to the difficulties with which the staff and those controlling the railways in the Northern Division were faced as compared with those controlling the railways in the Southern and Central Divisions. Those who did not recognise the circumstances might be apt to condemn the management of the Northern Railways. A number of the main lines in the North were not connected with one another, and naturally that meant additional expense in the way of freight in obtaining the various supplies for the different lines. On a previous vote he had pointed out that a large amount was spent in freight on coal for the Northern Railways, and that also applied to the various requirements of the railways in the Northern Division. Until recently the Mackay line was not linked up, and freight had to be paid on the requirements for that line. Then the Northern Railway from Townsville was not linked up with the Cairns line, and they also had small lines running out from Cooktown and Normanton, and the cost of conveying the requirements necessary to carry on those lines naturally added to the cost of running them. The general manager in the Northern Division pointed out in his report that where it cost 8d. per mile for coal in the Central Division, it cost 1s. 6d. per mile in the Northern Division; and, when the freights and fares were worked on the same basis, naturally it affected the percentage return on the railways. That applied to all the commodities that were required for the Northern Railways. They had very great industries in the North, and hon. members did not realise what the North was like. It was necessary to know the amount that was carried over the various railways in North Queensland to realise to a certain extent the wealth of North Queensland. The

[*Mr. Green.*

general manager had pointed out, as had been stated the previous day by the hon. member for Mundingbarra, that, when one of the great industries was affected, it naturally affected the carrying capacity of the whole of the lines in North Queensland. But, notwithstanding the great slump in the number of sheep carried last year in North Queensland, it was such a prosperous community that the freights from primary and other industries almost compensated for that; and whilst the railway returns did not come up to anticipations, yet they exceeded to a large extent the returns for the previous year. Unfortunately, it was not anticipated that the returns would be maintained this year. Last year the deficiency was not due to the railways not working up to their available earning capacity. During the year 150,853 cattle were carried by rail on the Northern Railways as compared with 119,139 for the previous year. The pig traffic showed an increase of 2,484 as compared with the previous year. The frozen meat traffic showed a large increase as compared with the previous year, the output for the past year being 33,409 tons as against 14,407 tons for the previous year, which was an increase of 24,002 tons. The number of horses carried was 13,225 as compared with 10,206 in the previous year. The sheep traffic showed a decrease of 65,820 for the year; but whilst they found that the sheep traffic showed a decrease, 91,370 bales of wool were carried as against 53,158 for the previous year, an increase of 33,212. Notwithstanding the slump in the copper industry, 5,243 tons of blister copper were carried, as against 8,157 tons the previous year. It was to be hoped that the copper mines would be reopened in the various districts, so that the railways of North Queensland might receive additional carriage by the large amount of mineral freight. The sugar-cane and sugar traffic showed an increase over last year due to the drought which prevailed the previous year. The timber industry in the Cairns district was very heavy, and produced an increase of railway revenue from the carriage of log and sawn timber. This year they expected that the carriage of sugar on the railway would far exceed anything that had been experienced before in the history of the railways in North Queensland. Notwithstanding the slump towards the end of the financial year, the immense amount of carriage on the North Queensland railways indicated the prosperity and the possibilities of North Queensland. If they were placed on the same footing as he had previously indicated, he ventured to say that they would get into the position of being one of the most profitable propositions in railway construction in any portion of the Commonwealth.

He was very pleased that the general manager had commented upon the excellence of the staff. He knew the anxiety that the general manager in Townsville had in connection with the slump in various industries. There was no more capable general manager in the department, and no one could have a more capable staff. With good seasons, open markets, and good prices, and with a staff faithfully carrying out their work from the lowest to the highest, he hoped that they would see more return for their labours when profitable seasons returned.

He would now like to refer to some letters that had been read by the hon. member for Mundingbarra. Whilst, no doubt, they should

be treated with contempt, they contained deliberate misstatements, and it was only right that he should refute those misstatements.

Mr. PEASE: They were only replies to your own letters.

Mr. GREEN: They were not. The statement regarding the vote of confidence in Mr. Bamford was absolutely incorrect, and the hon. member for Mundingburra knew that, as he was present at the meeting.

Mr. DASH: He moved a vote of confidence in Miss Preston Stanley.

Mr. GREEN: He did not do that either. That man did not take the chair at any of his (Mr. Green's) meetings, but he did take the chair at a meeting held by his opponent at West End. In connection with the inquiry as to that man's previous conduct the defence was carried out by the secretary of the union, Mr. Morrow, and he (Mr. Green) was called as a witness as to the man's condition when he saw him in the morning. He had read the letter as it came from the individual. There was attached to it a letter from the general manager which bore out the statement of the man that he was not dismissed for misconduct but on account of a general retrenchment, and he (Mr. Green) acted on that assumption. Since that time he had learnt that there was more behind the matter than general retrenchment, and, in view of that, he had written to the individual and told him that, if he had been dismissed for misconduct, he could not ask his (Mr. Green's) assistance to get reinstated in the service. He thought he had justified his attitude, and he felt sure that the railway employees in Townsville would recognise that.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): He regretted the necessity of some of the railway men in Northern Queensland having had to be retrenched, and some of their friends opposite had been trying to make political capital out of the men having to be retrenched or "deflated." Everyone who had travelled through North Queensland knew the effect on the Great Northern Railway of the collapse of the mining industry in that portion of the State. The closing down of Cloncurry alone had caused a great falling off in traffic on the Northern railway, and in addition to that, the meatworks in Townsville had not operated last season to the extent they usually did.

Mr. JONES: There have been too many strikes.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member seemed to be obsessed with strikes and repudiation. There were no strikes now, but strikes had occurred in the past, and would occur again, no matter what Government were in power. A railway worker had as much right to ask for a fair price for his labour as a grazier had to ask for a fair price for his cattle. He did not think the Arbitration Court would stop strikes altogether. The closing down of all the industries in the North had been responsible for the falling off in railway traffic. No one regretted the necessity for having to put men off more than the Government party, and he hoped the depression would not continue for long. He thought the opening of the Bowen coalfield would not only give relief to the railways in North Queensland but would be a big factor in the development of the mining industry in that part of the State. The hon. member for

Murilla had said that the Government would not keep a man in the State service unless he was a member of a union. He thought the weakness of the Government had been in the direction of placating their enemies and not doing enough for their friends. There had been no victimisation of the heads of the departments by the Government. No matter what a man's political opinion might be, since the present Government took office there had been no interference with his private opinions. Not so with past Governments. As the Chairman well knew, when he was shouting "Sandgate train!" from No. 4 platform at Central Station, because of his political opinions he was kept there shouting "Sandgate train!" although he had the ability to advance in the railway service, and would have advanced if he had been given the reasonable chance he should have had without any political interference. Many other men in the railway service had been transferred to as far distant places as possible. If there had been a railway to Boulia or Camooweal, the officials of the Railway Union would have been transferred there in the early days. When hon. members of the present Opposition were sitting on the Government side of the Chamber they gave railway men no encouragement, and would not allow them to form a union of any size without the interference of the late Commissioner for Railways, Mr. Evans, who worked himself up from the lowest to the highest rung of the ladder, and who was an autocrat in his own little tin-pot way. It was time the men had some means of placing their grievances before the Commissioner. When in 1916 he, as a railway servant, made application for a pass here, which was due to him, it took him two days to get it. He was bundled around from one office to another until he fell on a chap called Sturgess, who told him to come back next morning at 9 o'clock. He turned up as requested, and Sturgess kept him sitting in the lobby until at 12 o'clock it suited his convenience to see him. It did not matter to the officials, because he was one of their employees. Had any hon. member of that Chamber gone along he would have had the privilege of walking straight in. Whether a man were a railway employee or otherwise, if he had an appointment, he should be given access to the Commissioner at the time appointed.

Mr. VOWLES: Does not that apply to the Minister very often?

Mr. RIORDAN: When he made an appointment with the Minister he had the time stated. If he went along without having made an appointment, he would not expect to get in ahead of other people who were waiting; he would be prepared to wait his turn. Hon. members brought grievances to that Chamber, as the hon. member for Murilla had done the previous night in connection with some chap named Moore, who had nine children and had been dismissed from the service. That man was a member of the Queensland Railway Union and also of the Primary Producers' Union. If the Primary Producers' Union had been any good, it would have had his case brought before the Commissioner.

Mr. VOWLES: They tried to.

Mr. RIORDAN: If he had a good grievance, he would have received consideration, if not from the Commissioner at least from the Minister, who at all times was prepared

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to listen to the grievances of employees. The leader of the Opposition fell on some "Aunt Sallies" at times and accused hon. members of using political influence to have someone reinstated or to have some work done. On the previous night the hon. gentleman advocated the lighting of the Dalby station with electricity for the down Western mail, which arrived at Dalby at 4 o'clock in the morning. During the month he (Mr. Riordan) was in Dalby, he noticed that the council turned off the electric light at midnight. He did not know whether the leader of the Opposition wanted the Government to keep the dynamo going all night to light up the road crossing at the Dalby Railway Station. If he did, it would be more expensive than the present method of lighting.

Mr. VOWLES: They have no light.

Mr. RIORDAN: There was an arc light there. It might have come out of the ark; nevertheless the light was there, and there was nothing wrong with its being lowered a little. It would be effective with a shade over it, and would cost the department somewhere about a day's pay.

Mr. VOWLES: I was talking about the station light.

Mr. RIORDAN: There would be nothing wrong with putting another light a little further along. The method of lighting at the Dalby station was very effective and up-to-date when compared with the methods in North Queensland, and it was time the Government broke away from spoon-feeding districts in and around Brisbane, and got busy in North Queensland.

During the depression in the mining industry, the Government had carried on operations at Chillagoe. They had shown a loss of £48,000, but indirectly, thanks to the railway and other revenue, the loss was only about £10,000. The profits on the Cairns Railway alone amounted to somewhere about £38,000. In addition to that, the Chillagoe works had kept thousands and thousands of men off the unemployment market, and away from the relief depot.

Mr. FLETCHER: A ridiculous argument.

Mr. RIORDAN: It might appear ridiculous to the hon. member, because he made some of the most ridiculous statements ever made in the Chamber; and one could expect nothing else from a man who came there weeping with a brief for the shareholders of Mount Morgan. The leader of the Opposition also asked that the railways be taken away from political control. He (Mr. Riordan) was utterly opposed to their being taken away from political control.

Mr. MAXWELL: They are under political control?

Mr. RIORDAN: They were, and that was the proper place for them. Whom would the hon. member for Toowong get to run the Cooktown and Normanton to Croydon Railways? Would private enterprise do it?

Mr. MAXWELL: I do not want private enterprise.

Mr. RIORDAN: He did not think the hon. member knew what he wanted. He said he wanted efficiency, but hon. members must know that, if the Government wanted to get efficiency, they must pay for services rendered, the same as private employers. They said they were going to run the railways on business lines. The hon. member for Port

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Curtis told them that the Mount Morgan company ran their concern on business lines—that it had to pay. To put into operation what hon. members opposite advocated, there would have to be both an increase in fares and freights and a reduction in wages. They could not get away from that fact, and hon. members could not pull the legs of anyone outside on the point.

Mr. FLETCHER: They know too much—they do not want their legs pulled.

Mr. RIORDAN: They knew so much that they were not going to be caught with the chaff of the hon. member for Port Curtis—a young man who had been brought up in the methods of the Yankees, but who recently had to apologise to the freezers of the Gladstone meatworks, and thus was taught that such methods were not tolerated in this country. Breaking away from political control on the railways would affect not only the Normanton-Croydon and Cooktown Railways, but also the Great Northern Railway. The opponents of the Government argued that whilst the slump continued in the pastoral industry, there would have to be a reduction in wages; or—because they could not keep the workers below a certain standard of living, if they wanted any sort of efficiency—an increase in freights and fares. They had had a private company operating 100 miles of railway—the Chillagoe company—and their freights were anything from 33 per cent. to 50 per cent. above the Government freights. The Act allowed them to

charge somewhere about 33 per [11.30 a.m.] cent. above the Government rates,

but in some cases they charged twice as much. On the Chillagoe line, those having maize to rail were charged 1s. 6d. per ton loading charges, and were charged for unloading as well, while they were also charged for a full truck load if there was not sufficient to fill the truck. At the present time, the Government were carrying stuff at a rate that would not pay for the loading; and yet men were loading that stuff, unloading it, and storing it, and who was getting the benefit of that? Did hon. members on the other side want an increase in freights and fares? If the railways were run on business lines, it would have a bad effect on the development of the State.

Mr. FLETCHER: We would not do anything that would have a bad effect on the State.

Mr. RIORDAN: The hon. member would run it on business lines like the hon. member for Toowong would run the ferries. He would put up the charges on the ferries and reduce the wages. That was the only way that he could see out of the position.

Mr. FLETCHER: You cannot see further than your nose.

Mr. RIORDAN: If he could not see any further than the hon. member for Port Curtis, then he would be very sorry for himself. The hon. member could only see matters from the point of view of the employers, while members on the Government side were prepared to take a fairminded view of matters in connection with the development and advancement of the State, and at the same time give good service with a public utility and endeavour to keep the men in that service employed at a decent wage. Hon. members opposite endeavoured to put the whole of the blame on the employees. There might be faults on both sides, but there was a good deal to be said against the manage-

ment of the railways. There was a good deal of bungling in regard to the management, and if they had efficiency at the head of the branches, then they would get efficiency in the lower ranks. From his knowledge of the railway men, he said that they did more than a fair day's work, and prior to the Labour Government coming into power, for a very poor day's pay.

Mr. FLETCHER: Do not your Government prevent methods of efficiency from operating?

Mr. RIORDAN: He had never heard the hon. member for Port Curtis point out any way in which the Government had stopped efficiency from operating, but when hon. members opposite were in power, they did stop efficiency from operating through getting their political puppets put into jobs, while there were men in the department more capable of doing the work. That system did not operate to-day. If a man was harshly dealt with, he had a right to appeal and state his case, and if his organisation could put up a case for him and show that he was more efficient than the man appointed, then he would get the job. That was the best method of obtaining efficiency. He knew of a good many instances where special trains had been put on when there was no loading for them. After the station-master had wired arranging for a special train, they had found that there were only a few tons over the load for the ordinary train, and the guard and driver had told the station-master that they could carry that load on the one train; but on account of the station-master having arranged for a special train, it had to be run, because the station-master was not game enough to take the initiative and cancel the train. Special trains had to be run whether the load was there or not. If those men in charge of stations were given a little more power, they would get more efficiency than they got from the bungling heads of the departments. He hoped that the Economy Board, now that they had finished their arduous labours in going round making recommendations and putting off a few gate-keepers here and a few porters there, would be given some useful occupation. He hoped it would not be very long before every man in the State would be working, and that that Parliament or the Federal Parliament would make a move to bring about a state of things when there would be no unemployment in the railways or in any other industry, and when men, during a time of depression, would have some little home where they could work on their own farms. They had had three gentlemen on that Economy Board who could be more usefully occupied, and it would have effected greater economy had they been so occupied. The general manager in each division should be competent to make recommendations if the department was overstaffed. Not only the Government but the workers in the Railway Department did not stand for an overstaffed service. The great pity was that the Government had been financially embarrassed by hon. members on the other side, and as a result, there were no public works on which those men could be employed when they went out of industry. His complaint was that the members of the Economy Board were partly responsible if there was any overstaffing. Mr. Steer, Mr. Chambers, and the other traffic managers had charge of big districts, and if they had done their duty in the past as traffic managers, the Railway Department would not have got into its present

position. If the position had been brought about by a depression in trade, hon. members could not blame the employees. Men had been knocked off from the lower grades, and if in the past it required certain officials at high salaries to keep those men on an efficient basis, then the time had come when those high-salaried officials should be retrenched. The amount paid to them in salaries would keep a number of men in the lower grades in occupation to-day. He hoped that the Commissioner and the Minister would find some useful occupation for the Economy Board, which he was pleased to say was defunct.

Mr. WINSTANLEY (*Queenton*): He had listened with a good deal of interest to the remarks made on the Railways vote. He thought that the anxiety of hon. members opposite was so great about getting to the Railways vote that they really had something to say about it. He had expected that there was going to be something in the nature of a revelation; but, from the beginning to the end of the debate, he did not think that he had listened to a more inconsistent, a more illogical, and a more conflicting set of arguments than were used by hon. members opposite. One hon. member said one thing which another contradicted, whilst another argued for something entirely opposite. There was no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that hon. members opposite did not really know what they wanted. It was pleasing to read in that morning's paper that a change was taking place so far as the Southern part of the railway system was concerned. He was sure that, not only those directly interested in railway affairs, but those indirectly interested would be pleased to see that there was a prospect of more traffic and more produce coming from outside places to the seaboard, and that the prospects generally in the Southern part of the railway system were likely to improve. He hoped they would go on improving. It was rather unfortunate, particularly for the Northern division, that they found things in the condition they were in at the present time. It was rather interesting to hear the hon. member for Port Curtis—who posed as a prophet—telling them that he (Mr. Fletcher) had no need to learn things, or read things, or be told things—that he knew things by intuition and could see much further ahead than anyone else in that Chamber; and probably he thought he could see much further than anyone else outside. It was rather remarkable, in view of statements that the hon. gentleman had made that he did not see what was going to take place so far as the cattle industry, of which he had claimed to have an expert knowledge, was concerned. It was common knowledge that expert cattlemen, interested in the cattle industry, had waited on the General Manager of the North Queensland Railways at the end of last year and the beginning of this year, and impressed upon him the necessity that there was for getting all the rolling-stock into good order, and for mustering all he could, as there was going to be a record cattle season in North Queensland this year. He believed that those men thought so. Evidently the hon. member for Port Curtis had not been in communication with them, or else he had not told them what he knew about it. The cattle-buyers were out in the Western country buying cattle, which were beginning to come in, when quite unexpectedly, notwithstanding what the hon.

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member might say to the contrary, the bottom practically dropped out of the meat industry, and the cattle-buyers were withdrawn and cattle ceased to come in except what had been bought and had to come in, and consequently certain causes over which neither the Government, the railway authorities, nor anybody else on this side of the ocean had any control, brought about a cessation of traffic on the Northern railways to the detriment of those connected with the cattle industry and everybody else concerned, because people living in the Western towns had to suffer in other directions because there was not the traffic to keep the trains going.

The same applied to the metal industry, which had been the means of producing exceptionally good revenue for the Railway Department. Owing to the collapse of the metal industry in the far West, towns like Charters Towers had suffered very severely through no fault of the Government or anybody else in this country. Nothing that could be done by the Government could have prevented the collapse that had taken place; but, as a result, all over the country people had been deprived of an exceptionally good train service, and on certain sections, instead of two or three trains a day, they had to put up with two or three trains a week. Trains could not be run if there was nothing for them to carry. The Commissioner in his report referred to the question of engine power. The report stated—

“Great difficulty was experienced in the first part of the year in keeping sufficient engines running to cope with the traffic. The position was relieved by the turning out of eighteen new locomotives of the C.17 type and the repair works in the Ipswich workshops being overtaken.”

He did not know how far that might apply to the Southern railway system, but he was very much afraid that it was not correct so far as the Northern system was concerned.

It was a well-known fact that rolling-stock and engines in particular were not nearly up to the standard that they ought to be. The men were expected to take engines on to the road until they practically dropped to pieces on the road, which was very unfair. It was a well-known fact that the men reported when they brought in the engines that they were defective, and that something should be done; but they were told that it was only a minor detail and a matter of small significance. The old proverb, “A stitch in time saves nine,” was not practised, and in all probability the engines had to go out time after time because they could not be withdrawn for repair until they practically dropped to pieces on the road. He hoped that something would be done in connection with this matter so far as the Northern system was concerned, so that they would have an opportunity of doing the fair thing and doing the just thing to the department and the community in whose interests the railways were run. There was no doubt, so far as the rolling-stock was concerned—especially carriages that ran out long distances in the North-West—that they needed better attention and improvement. He did not know whether it was because there were not sufficient carriages, or because they could not be withdrawn for repair, but practically the riff-raff of the railway were in use on those particular sections. Anybody who had to travel 400 or 500 miles in the train in the

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summer time in North Queensland was certainly entitled to something decent so far as travelling conveniences were concerned. Something more might be done than had been done up to the present time.

Something had been said by the leader of the Opposition about the lighting of the Dalby station. There were quite a number of other places that might be better illuminated at the present time. It had always seemed to him to be false economy for stations to be in darkness or semi-darkness when people were going home, particularly when trains arrived at the stations in the dark and sometimes in the middle of the night. There was a station within easy distance of Brisbane that was lit with kerosene. He could not imagine that it was economical to light up a station with seven or eight kerosene lamps, taking into consideration the cost of lamp glasses and the work entailed in attending to the lamps, when electric light was available. He did not know what the reasons were for refusing to light stations like those with electric light. Accidents had happened and were liable to happen again, especially where there was a level crossing near by, and it was necessary that these stations should be well lighted.

He wished to say something with reference to the lengthsmen's quarters on the railway lines. The hon. member for Toowoong exhibited a picture of some lengthsmen's quarters the other night which appeared in the railway paper. He thought the hon. member did the department a gross injustice by the statements he made in that connection. In bygone years the conditions in regard to lengthsmen's quarters were an absolute disgrace. While the present Government might not have done everything that ought to have been done to remedy matters, they had made all the improvement they possibly could under the circumstances. The contrast between lengthsmen's quarters now and what they were in the past was almost inconceivable; there was such a great improvement. The lengthsmen had to live out on the Western plains under a boiling sun, and formerly they had to put up with a place not much bigger than a tin trunk. The Railway Department were making improvements in their condition as fast as possible. The two places shown in the picture exhibited by the hon. member for Toowoong were, he supposed, about the worst places that could be found, but they were referred to as if they were fair samples. It was just on a par with his going into the hon. member's place of business and buying an old, worn-out paint brush, and then exhibiting it as a sample of articles which the hon. member sold. In some cases the lengthsmen owned their cottages, and, while they might not perhaps be up to date, as they owned them they did not want to change them; but where men were living in temporary quarters which were not regarded as homes, the Government were trying to bring about a better state of affairs. There was no doubt that the conditions under which the men lived at the present time, as well as the pay they received, were a great improvement on former conditions. One of the things which enabled past Governments to meet expenses as they did was the low rate of wages paid to the workers. The conditions of the railway workers were the worst in every part of the State in times gone by. It was imperative that they should be improved, and when the Labour Government

came into power, they took the opportunity of improving the conditions, and he was sure that in the majority of instances the men appreciated what was being done.

It was remarkable that any criticism worthy of the name of criticism from hon. members opposite had been almost exclusively in the direction of wanting more railways, or extensions of existing railways, and at the same time giving them a cheaper service. He found from the Commissioner's report that out of about thirty-six railways that neither paid working expenses nor interest on the cost of construction, thirty-one were in electorates represented by hon. members opposite. In some instances the railways could have been dispensed with and the community would not have suffered. Some of them did not pay for axle grease. Since he had come into Parliament he had never seen a motion introduced for the approval of the plans and specifications of a proposed railway which was not going to be the best paying railway ever passed by Parliament. Hon. members opposite made that statement, and yet railways had been passed which had not the slightest hope of paying for axle grease. He remembered one proposal being introduced for a railway in connection with country he had gone over, and when he expressed his opinion, the then Secretary for Railways told him that he did not know what he was talking about. Since then that railway had come within the category of railways which did not pay expenses on the outlay. Some hon. member had made a remark about railways of an apparently paying nature but which did not pay. The line from South Brisbane to Cleveland had never been a paying proposition; but for 12 miles from Melbourne Street to Manly, which was a double line and trains were running all day long, it had paid, but never more than 4 per cent., and it was not paying that now. The secret was that the resumptions for land when the line was built cost more than the line itself, and the line was consequently over-capitalised, and interest had to be paid on double the amount of the cost of construction. The railway enhanced the value of the land, and private individuals got the enhanced value. The Government was saddled with interest on the cost of the line, and also on the cost of resumptions. It was almost impossible for a railway like that to be a paying proposition.

A good deal had been said by hon. members opposite about political control, but he did not think there had been one instance given which showed that political control had been detrimental in connection with the railways. There was no doubt that, when railways were placed outside the influence of politicians and the Minister altogether, and put under three Commissioners, who were told to make them a paying proposition, they did so; but they did it on the lines indicated by the hon. member for Windsor—that payment must be made for services rendered. The £6,500,000 deficit which had been referred to would have had to be paid to a large extent by constituents of hon. members opposite if that attitude had been adopted—by the primary producer instead of being paid by the general taxpayer. Hon. members opposite had said that the railways could be reorganised, and all that kind of thing; but there would have had to be an increase of fares and freights to make the railways a paying proposition.

Talking about political control, some people who held high positions in the Railway Department were appointed for a further term of five years at a high salary by the previous Liberal Government just prior to the advent of this Government, in the expectation of their being kept in places for which they were not fitted.

[12 noon] This Government took necessary and useful action in that direction. After all the advice that had been given, the position remained very much as it was. Either freights and fares must be increased and people must pay more than in the past for the services rendered, or, until there was an increase in traffic, they must put up with what they were getting at the present time. They ought to complete the lines they had in hand, particularly those which were urgently needed, but they should not construct any new railways at the present price of capital. What was necessary was the development of the land already opened up, to bring in more traffic and make the railways a better paying concern than they were at present.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): He had listened to the Minister and other hon. members in the hope of gaining all the information and knowledge he could in connection with the management of the railways, and with a view to ascertaining what means should be adopted to prevent the tremendous leakage that was taking place. He was actuated by only one desire—to see that their railways were run in the best interests of the whole of Queensland, with a view to assisting development to the utmost limit. He claimed that a deficit of £6,500,000 extending over a period of six years did not mean development. The Minister said that the deficit for the last year was in the pockets of the people. He (Mr. Taylor) claimed it was in the pockets of the people in London who lent them money, because it had to be made up out of consolidated revenue, which was secured to a large extent by taxation.

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I said it was in the pockets of the producers.

Mr. TAYLOR: If ever there was justification for an adjustment of fares and freights, it was at the present time. The shrinkage had not been caused by loss of traffic—else the Commissioner's report was wrong. He referred hon. members to page 9 of the report of the Commissioner, where that officer showed that the increase for 1920-21 over 1919-20 had been 1.02 per cent. in respect of passengers, 9.23 per cent. on parcels, 9.36 per cent. on minerals—which hon. members had stressed as having shown a tremendous falling off—20.66 per cent. on agricultural produce, 21.56 per cent. on wool, and 34.11 per cent. on live stock. The only decrease had been in respect of general merchandise, where it had been 6.13 per cent.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What about the additional mileage?

Mr. TAYLOR: There had been a few hundred miles additional, but not sufficient to account for the enormous shrinkage. They had had this enormous increase in revenue, yet they had as big a deficit as had ever been shown on the railways for any one year.

Mr. PEASE: What about the increased expenditure in wages and coal?

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Mr. TAYLOR: They had had increased expenditure, which, the Commissioner in his report pointed out, had been mainly on account of wages and materials. If those were the causes, why did they not as sensible men deal with them? The Minister told them they were carrying stuff as low as any other State in the Commonwealth. It was time they were not carrying stuff as low as any other State in the Commonwealth. An adjustment of fares and freights could be effected which would not press unduly on the man on the land, if it were left to the men who were in control of the system. Victoria was able to do it in 1920 without imposing extra taxation in the way of freights on the agricultural producer, and they could do it in Queensland. The cities and towns were not contributing their fair quota to the revenue of the State. Whether he was kicked out of Parliament or not did not worry him a bit. He said the people on the land at the present time were being bled white to provide for the pleasure and enjoyment of the people in the metropolitan districts, and it was time they "took a tumble" in that direction. On a previous occasion, when the present Treasurer was Secretary for Railways, he (Mr. Taylor) said that, if he had his way, he would raise the passenger fares in the metropolitan area by 15 per cent. to 20 per cent. on the following day. A few weeks afterwards they were raised. He hoped the Government would do the same now, because he contended they were not developing the State if the railways had to show a deficit such as they had last year. It was enough to break the hearts of the men in charge of the railways to be criticised in the way they had to be in that Chamber in connection with their management of a concern which had cost the State about £50,000,000. The officers of the department had to "carry the baby." They were told this, that, and the other expenditure was wrong, and that the economies effected were not right. They were found fault with, when the fault lay with circumstances over which they had no control. It was time the Government gave them that control.

Political control had been referred to during the debate. His idea was that the appointment of the Commissioner should be the function of the Government, but, after he had been appointed, the filling of the various positions should develop upon the officers concerned. He would read a little extract with regard to the Great Northern Railway, which would be found on page 44 of the Commissioner's report, and about which he would like the Minister to give them some information—

"Probably one of the most difficult problems to face in dealing with the running staff on the Great Northern Railway, and which causes considerable irritation and complaints to the Commissioner, is that caused by the great fluctuation in traffic, which during some periods necessitates overtime, and at others 'lying off.' This is clearly illustrated by the very great decrease in train mileage during the last half of the year under review. For the first six months the train miles run totalled 836,267, while in the last six months the total only reached 477,081, a little more than half the mileage of the first half-year. To keep a staff of running men sufficient to carry on the business for the first six

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months would mean during the last half of the year they would practically only receive half-time; while to carry only staff sufficient for the slack period would involve the payment of a very large sum in overtime, and the payment per annum of considerably more to each employee than Parliament had provided. It was hoped that, by carrying a staff to meet what was termed 'normal traffic,' both short time and excessive overtime would be lessened. Unfortunately, last year, through the excessive falling off of traffic, this result was not achieved, and excessive overtime was worked by some during the busy months, and also very short time during the slack period.

"To overcome this, I suggested a scheme which, in my opinion, would tend to equalise the yearly earnings of each employee, make overtime less attractive, and balance expenditure, but, unfortunately, the time was not opportune for its introduction."

That was signed by Arthur J. Crowther, General Manager and Acting Deputy Commissioner of the Northern Railways.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You believe in non-interference with the Commissioner? That matter was dealt with by the Commissioner himself. He did not agree with the General Manager.

Mr. TAYLOR: He is not saying that there was any interference politically in that matter. Whilst the railways were to a very great extent under political control, every member of Parliament had to take a certain advantage of the fact. It would be very interesting to know just what Mr. Crowther's report was, and why it was turned down. He was evidently making an effort to deal with a difficult situation. It was no use thinking that they could run their railways very much longer as they were at present. More than half their public debt had been spent on the railways. The Minister had mentioned education as another non-paying State activity. There were certain activities of a State which necessitated the expenditure of money without the receipt of any revenue from them, and one of those was education. Another was health. Any Government ought to see that such things were carried on in the best and most efficient way; but, so far as railways were concerned, the question of payment for services rendered should be considered as far as possible. He did not argue or intend to argue that their railways should always pay, or probably should be made to pay, but it was a farce to go in a direction which meant that they had to pay £1,700,000 for the railways out of consolidated revenue in one year. Hon. members opposite had said that the position was partly due to the extra wages and salaries paid to the men in the service, because the wages paid prior to the advent of the Labour Government were practically starvation wages. He would refer hon. members to the sworn evidence given in the Arbitration Court last year by Mr. Carroll, a member of the Legislative Council, and Mr. Moroney, secretary of the Railway Union. If hon. members looked up the files of the "Daily Standard" and other papers, they would find that those gentlemen said that, notwithstanding the extra money the men were receiving, they were no better off now than in 1914 or prior to 1914.

Mr. GLEDSON: That applies also to the ordinary worker.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: That is an ordinary statement. You do not attach any importance to that?

Mr. TAYLOR: If they did not attach importance to a sworn statement in the Arbitration Court, to what were they going to attach importance?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Were not the men asking for increased wages?

Mr. TAYLOR: Exactly. Hon. members opposite had been pointing out that the Government had done so much better for the employees, whereas the Opposition had been pointing out that they had not done a bit better than the previous Government. The evidence of those men was that in past years the men were better off than they were to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you think they were better off?

Mr. TAYLOR: He certainly thought that a man acting for the railway employees was in a better position to give evidence than he was.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Did you hear what Mr. Carroll said in the Legislative Council on the same subject?

Mr. TAYLOR: He did not, and he took more notice of what a man said in the Arbitration Court than of what he would say in that Chamber or in the Legislative Council.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: You talk about the good old days when the workers were better off. Do you want to see the cane farmers supplying cane at 10s. a ton?

Mr. TAYLOR: No. He had never expressed a wish to see anything of the kind. He was merely drawing attention to a comparison between the old conditions and wages to-day. If a man ten years ago could get as much for 1s. as he could get now for 2s., was he any better off or worse off because now he got twice the wages he used to get? During the last half-dozen years prices of everything had risen out of all proportion, and there did not appear to be any way of adjusting them or finalising the rise. Unfortunately, they had not got much "forrader" in that direction, but no doubt things were tending to a more normal condition—by which he did not mean starvation wages or abject poverty. He had never advocated that. He knew what it was to work for a living, and to be short of a £1 note as much as anybody; but they were striving to improve the conditions in Queensland, and, if the railway managers were allowed to have supreme control of the service, he believed they would have better control than at present. A scientific adjustment of fares and freights—call it what they would—could be made to stop the immense leakage that existed to-day. He hoped the Minister would seriously consider the criticisms offered from the Opposition side, although they were told that they had not advanced any suggestion that was helpful or intelligent in any way. He could bear out the remarks of the hon. member for Burke with regard to the limited powers of station-masters and other officials in the Railway Department. The powers of those men should not be so circumscribed. At present they could do very little at all, as everything had to be referred to headquarters or to some particular official before

anything could be done. If the station-masters and other men in responsible positions were given more authority, they should not have, in connection with the railways, such a balance-sheet as the one they had been considering during the present session.

Mr. STOPPFORD (*Mount Morgan*): The hon. member for Windsor stated that, although he was a metropolitan member, he would advocate that the railways in the metropolitan area and to the seaside should be made to contribute towards the revenue of the State. He (Mr. Stopford) was chairman of the Public Works Commission for some years, and he had recommended for the favourable consideration of the House many railways that, had he been acting for a private company, he certainly would not have recommended. The reason why he recommended those railways was because he believed that State-owned railways possessed many virtues that were reflected in an indirect manner in the benefits they conferred on the State, and one of the greatest benefits they found in a large populated area like Brisbane through the possession of State-owned railways was that they were able to give to the working population ready access to the seaside at a very low rate. They did not look for any financial return from the expenditure on those railways, but they looked for an indirect return through having a healthier working class and a more contented community through the advantages conferred upon them. Another great advantage that the cheap railway fares round about the metropolitan area gave them was that they were able to avoid in a large measure many of the evils of the older civilisations—evils known as slum areas. Under a system of State-owned railways, where they were able to convey the worker as far as Eagle Junction for the nominal fee of 3d. return, they were able, with other legislation, to permit him to live at least 4 or 5 miles from his work and to bring his children up under healthier conditions than would be possible if he were asked to pay a rate on the railway that would enable that railway to show a credit balance at the end of the year's transactions. If they were going to run the railways as a private company would be forced to run them, then they would have to charge a prohibitive rate, with the result that the workers would be forced to herd together in close proximity within the city area, which would have a bad effect on the physique of the race, as was shown conclusively during the great war, when in England the standard had to be repeatedly reduced because the physique of the men was such that they could not pass the necessary medical examination. In a young country like Queensland, with their vast unoccupied spaces and with their sunny climate, it would be a disgrace to legislators if those evils existed. If there was any portion of the State that owed much to the fact that they had in existence a State-owned railway, it was North Queensland, because they could not possibly hope to develop that part of the State unless they provided means of communication and transit to the settlers who were pioneering in those districts. He would submit for the favourable consideration of the Cabinet something that came under his notice since his electorate had become so disorganised through the industrial trouble. There were in that electorate 100 men who were the sons of farmers, or who, if they were not the sons of farmers,

Mr. Stopford.]

had at least some farming experience. When addressing those men he had pointed out the advantage it would be to themselves and the State if they were to go upon the land and endeavour to carve out homes for themselves independent of a boss. The result was that he approached the Lands Department, and was rather startled to find that the department had to confess that they could not settle 100 settlers in Queensland within easy access of a railway and give them a reasonable prospect of making a success of it. In North Queensland they were spending large sums of money in the construction of what was known as the North Coast Railway from Innisfail on, and they had the Tully River lands and the land on Maria Creek, where they had what was going to be the most successful soldier settlement in Australia. They had fertile lands close enough to the South Johnstone Sugar-mill to ensure success to any soldier who cared to work hard in the early stages, with the assistance he could get from the Federal Government. Success was assured, because he had sent some of his returned soldier electors up there and received most gratifying reports from them. While the State was spending a large amount of money in building that railway, they were hampered in the settlement of the land by the fact that the capacity of the South Johnstone Mill was limited to an additional 50,000 tons of cane. Although they had plotted out 180 blocks of land for returned soldier settlement, the mill capacity would only permit them to place eighty men on that land. As a result, that railway was not going to get the amount of traffic over it that the land in the vicinity was capable of providing unless the Government recognised their responsibility and duplicated the existing mill. He believed in the views expressed by many of the speakers—that not one more mile of railway should be built in Queensland. He believed, from his experience as chairman of the Public Works Commission, that the Government should come forward and say to those who were holding land along existing railway lines and not using it for productive purposes, “We are going to tax you on the non-productive value of your land, based on the income tax of the man on the block next to you.” In many of the country districts such unoccupied land constituted a menace by breeding pests to the detriment of the man who was utilising land in the neighbourhood. That was not something that the Labour party alone had subscribed to.

The organiser of the National party had given evidence before the Public Works Commission in Cairns, and he put the question to that organiser, who stated that there was not a farmer in North Queensland who would not subscribe to such a policy. If the Government would issue instructions that a certain portion of the land along their railway lines not put to productive use should be taxed on the income tax of the man with a similar block next to it within twelve months, much of that land could be resumed at a normal figure by the Government and given to men who would be prepared to put it to a use that would benefit the whole State.

Another matter wrapped up in the development of the State, and of vast importance in connection with the problem of making their railways pay, was a matter he had

[*Mr. Stopford.*

touched on some time ago when he advocated the building of roads as feeders to their railways. They had a Main Roads Board in existence, but he was not in favour of the policy that that board appeared to think it was their duty to pursue. He did not believe the Main Roads Board was there to give them a road from Brisbane to Toowoomba so that they might be able to “joy-ride” in motor-cars. A close study of the agricultural districts of the State, as chairman of the Commission, had showed him conclusively that alongside many of their agricultural lines that were not paying the State to-day interest on the money invested the area of production used for the development of the State by the production of agricultural products was limited to 3 miles from the railways owing to the bad state of the roads. The dairying industry was limited to 9 miles, and after that, although the land was just as good as it was within the railway area, it was given over to grazing. He contended that the railways returned to this State more than the original cost in enhanced land value on their Crown lands and enhanced timber values on timber that would otherwise have been destroyed if the railways had not been built. He claimed, although others might say it was a book-keeping entry, that the time had come—and it was probably an argument that Labour members would use if they were on the Opposition side of the Chamber, when a certain portion of that revenue should be credited to the Railways Department and earmarked for roads that would enable them to settle a population and carry on agricultural pursuits 7 or 8 miles on each side of the railways, and the dairying industry for a distance of, say, 15 miles. When they recognised those things and set themselves to deal with the problem without party feeling, they would see that what they were looking for in Queensland was not roads between their principal towns. The policy of the Main Roads Board might have been an excellent thing in Victoria, where the villages were a short distance apart and where intertown traffic could be carried on in between; but in Queensland they should be in a position to provide feeders to their railways, not only to make the railways pay, but to destroy something that hit the eye of any man going into agricultural centres to-day. The Public Works Commission would arrive at a town to-day, and just about the time for the train to go they would see thirty vehicles in all stages of disrepair and a large number of horse vehicles bringing one cream can or two cream cans to the railway station. Those men were taking themselves away from the avenues of production to do what they could do systematically with one or two men with a little organisation. The success of Germany during the early stages of the war, and the success that was assisting her in her reconstruction work to-day, was brought about by scientific organisation, and, unless the people of Queensland prepared to organise their industrial life, something like that, they were not going to overcome many of the evils that confronted them to-day.

Another matter he wished to touch upon affected, not only the interest of North Queensland, but the whole of the interests of this State, and before he sat down he hoped the matter would claim the attention of all sections of the Committee. There was in Queensland to-day a Commission going into

a matter of vital importance to the State, and that was the linking up of the railway systems of the Northern Territory and the South of Australia. The Premier of Queensland had made many statements to the Press claiming the advantage of having that link made through Queensland, via Camooweal and Dajarra, and thence along the line originally proposed by the late Dr. Kidston. That was a matter of vital importance to Queensland and of vital interest to the Federal Government and to the people of Australia. He understood that some agreement existed between South Australia and the Federal Government that the line should take a certain course. That agreement might have been arrived at without due regard to all the evidence that could be adduced in favour of the route going through Queensland. Being authorised by the Cabinet to make investigations into the development of the Gulf country by a system of railways, the Public Works Commission had traversed a large portion of the Northern portion of the State. As a result of those investigations, he was satisfied that North Queensland should be settled by building a railway from Camooweal to Burketown, with a connection from Catherine River to Camooweal through Dajarra and on through the route suggested by the late Dr. Kidston, of which he was not in a position to speak about because he had not been over it, eventually linking up from Cunnamulla to Bourke. That route should have the undivided support of all sections of the Committee. He hoped the Premier would not go into recess until he had extended an invitation to hon. members opposite and the Queensland Federal members to form some sort of a committee, and that he would instruct his officials and experts of the various departments to prepare a case for Queensland to see that the claims of Queensland were placed in a proper manner before the Commonwealth Royal Commission before they came to deliberate on the evidence they had taken.

Recognising that through State-owned railways and through the advantages of development and other indirect benefits, he recommended the early construction of the North Coast Railway to the Tully River, as the settlement of, say, another 100 men on the Tully River—who would be engaged in productive pursuits, who would require an equal number, if not more men, in industrial pursuits to provide them with the necessaries of life—would be an adequate return for the expenditure of money on that railway instead of, as some hon. members suggested, either increasing freights or reducing wages.

Regarding the extension of the capacity of the South Johnstone Mill—which was one of the finest mills of Queensland with splendid extraction capacity—he had been informed by officers in charge of the Government mills that it could be duplicated, and he sincerely trusted that would be done in time to have the added freight coming over the railways immediately they were prepared to receive it.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): He thought that the last two speakers had hit the nail on the head so far as making their railway system what it should be was concerned. The leader of the Nationalist party, who represented a metropolitan constituency, had shown what would help to prevent the deficits with which they were faced at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Increased fares and freights.

Mr. EDWARDS: Increased fares and freights in the large centres.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: All centres.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member did not say in all centres. He (Mr. Edwards) had always held that it was absolutely necessary to put the people in the large centres of population on the same footing as the people in the country districts with regard to fares and freights; but, at the present time, people in the large centres were travelling on the railways for about half the rates paid by those in the country districts. The worst paying branch line in the country districts acted as a feeder to the main line, and helped to make it pay, and the people in the country districts who were paying such high freights and fares were making it possible for those in large centres of population to enjoy the advantage of low freights and fares. He agreed with the hon. member for Mount Morgan that land settlement should go hand in hand with railway construction. That was one of the most important questions before them. They should give every encouragement to the people to settle in the country and increase production. The increased traffic caused thereby would make the railways pay. It was necessary to see that the unoccupied land adjacent to the railways was brought under cultivation, and to bring that about the man in the country would have to receive the same treatment from the Government as the man in the large centres of population. So many concessions had been given to the large centres of population that it had had the effect of drawing the people from the country to the towns.

Mr. PEASE: That is not true.

Mr. EDWARDS: It was true. He thought that the Southern railways were practically carrying the Northern railways. The Commissioner's report showed that there was scarcely a railway in the North which was paying, but many in the South were paying, so that it could be said that the Southern railways were practically carrying the Northern railways. He did not say that that was wrong, because they had to develop the State in every possible way. The hon. member for Mount Morgan had made a statement which it was hard to understand. The hon. member had been chairman of the Public Works Commission for a number of years, and, after recommending various railways, he now stated that he did not think it a wise thing to build any railways at all. He hoped that the Secretary for Railways would recognise the necessity of squaring up freights and fares. Notwithstanding what was said by the Minister about cheap rates, the people in the country districts were paying more for the carriage of groceries and other articles than was the case in any other State of the Commonwealth. Those were the things that were inducing young people to stay in the cities and were preventing the development of the country.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The leader of the Nationalist party was to be congratulated on the action he was taking in connection with the railways, when he made it quite clear that he was in favour of increasing fares and freights. In dealing with the Northern Division, the hon. member had

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made it quite clear that, if he had his way, he would increase fares and freights in and about the metropolitan areas. He was sorry they could not get a declaration from the hon. member for Nanango as to where he stood in regard to the attitude taken up by members of the Opposition, who had hesitated to say that the remedy in regard to the deficit on the railways was to increase fares and freights; or, in the words of the leader of the Nationalist party, that the people should pay for services rendered. It was refreshing to hear the hon. member for Townsville say that, notwithstanding the slump with regard to copper in North Queensland, North Queensland was still prosperous, and—the hon. member should have added—prosperous under a Labour Government.

The question of free railways which had been mentioned was not new; free railways had been advocated before he was born. Hon. members who advocated them were not alone in their advocacy. The secretary of the Farmers' Association on the Inkerman Estate recently wrote to him asking him, as member for the district, to place before the Secretary for Railways a request that their cane should be carried free from Home Hill to Proserpine, a distance of a little over 90 miles. Although the request was not granted, they had done that to enable the cane to be crushed at the Proserpine mill, owing to the fact that the mill in their own locality was not able to deal with the crop. On one occasion the Government had taken over 30,000 tons from Home Hill to Proserpine to be crushed. He had received many letters of thanks from sugar-growers from Home Hill for the assistance given them by the Government.

Labour members as a party were not advocating free railways. Where did the hon. member for Aubigny stand in the matter? Did he believe that fares and freights should be raised all round, like the leader of the Nationalists, or did he believe that only the city people should pay increased fares?

Mr. MOORE: I do not believe in carting sugar-cane free to a mill, and charging high freights for the carriage of fodder for the feeding of starving stock.

Mr. COLLINS: He was quite willing to admit that in Mr. Crowther they had a good man as general manager of the Northern railways system. He had found Mr. Crowther to be a good man when he was in the Southern portion of the State, and the Government had shown some judgment in having selected him for the position he now occupied. He had received many letters of thanks for the way the Government had made it possible for the cane-growers to get their cane to the mill easily by providing the number of sidings they had provided.

Mr. BRAND: In the Bowen electorate?

Mr. COLLINS: He represented a more important sugar district than the hon. member for Burrum. He was dealing with the railway system of the North at the present time. When the Southern railway vote was before the Chamber he waited patiently to hear the hon. member's views, and he was quite satisfied the hon. member knew very little in regard to the conditions of the railway system in North Queensland. He was very pleased to find in the Commissioner's report, at page 41, the following passage:—

"The standard of maintaining the per-

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manent way of the Northern railways should not, owing to the long distances over which few trains run, be the same as that fixed for railways in Southern Queensland carrying a much heavier traffic. Moreover, many of the railways in the North were built for light traffic at slow speeds, and to establish the Southern standard on these lines would necessitate considerable expenditure in improving the road, which expenditure should be a charge to capital. At present, owing to reduced earnings and very high cost of labour and material, the standard has been fixed so as to carry the traffic with safety, and make good any depreciation. As traffic improves, and money becomes more plentiful, and more modern appliances can be used, such as motor pump cars for fettlers, the standard will be improved, and the speed of trains increased.

"The erection of fettlers' cottages in the West has been proceeded with, ten married men's and eight single men's quarters having been built during the year.

"The lengthsmen appreciate highly the improvement in their living conditions afforded by having these cottages, and, seeing that interest is returned on the expenditure by way of rent, it is to be hoped that in the current year a sum of money will be set aside to continue the erection of similar buildings."

He wanted to draw the attention of the Minister to two paragraphs in that report—that relating to the provision of motor pump cars for fettlers being one. When he was in Opposition in 1910-11 he had hammered away at that particular matter. It was about time that they, who belonged to a race of people claiming, so far as the inventive faculties were concerned, that they had reached a very high stage of development, discontinued the practice of asking men to work their own pump cars to their work. As Mr. Crowther had mentioned, they should make available motor pump cars for fettlers. On many occasions when he had been organising in different parts of Queensland he had gone with those men and had worked his own passage; and, after having done 10 or 12 miles, the men did not feel as fresh as they would if they had been able to sit back at their ease in a motor pump car.

Mr. MOORE: Do any of them go 10 miles?

Mr. COLLINS: Another portion of the paragraph he had read stated that the lengthsmen appreciated highly the improvement in their living conditions afforded by having cottages built for them. He hoped that system would be extended so that the men who were responsible for the maintenance of the railways would have provided for them up-to-date accommodation. He had never thought they could do everything by a stroke of the pen. They had to advance step by step.

Reference had been made during the debate to the question of the railways not paying. It was quite true that the railways in the North did not pay any better than they did in the South.

Mr. MOORE: They pay worse.

Mr. COLLINS: Anybody who had followed the earnings of the railways for a number of years must know that, when the

great Cloncurry field was in full swing, the Northern railway system was a paying proposition; and he had no doubt that, when things were adjusted throughout the world and cheap coke was provided with the development of their coal mines, the Cloncurry mines would be reopened. Much depended upon the cheapening of coke. When the railway to the Bowen coalfield was completed and cheap coke was made available to the owners of the large copper mines in the western portion of the North, he had no doubt their railways would be more successful than they were at the present time. Hon. gentlemen did not seem to realise that the Government had improved the condition of the workers on the railways. He was not one of those who was carried away with the cry that it cost more to live to-day than it did in 1914. That was the argument used by the leader of the Opposition. They had no guarantee that, had there been a Tory Government sitting on the Treasury benches during the past six years, wages would have been increased at all. He realised that millions of people belonging to the working class in all countries had to live upon very little indeed, and it did not follow that, because there was a war on, wages would have been increased had their friends opposite been sitting on the Government side. For years past hon. members on the other side had opposed bringing the railway men within the scope of the Arbitration Court. It did not always follow that, because prices of commodities increased, wages would increase proportionately. He intended to let the electors of Queensland know the amount that had been granted them in the way of increases. He found that on 1st September, 1921, the hon. member for Rockhampton (Mr. Forde) asked the Secretary for Railways the following question:—

“What is the total amount expended in increases to railway men since the Labour Government took office in 1915; and what was the total amount granted to them by way of increased wages and salaries in the last six years of Liberal Government?”

The answer was—

“Since 1915, £1,841,575; in the six (6) years immediately preceding 1915, £364,479.”

He supposed they would be told that the Arbitration Court awarded the increased wages. That might be so, but they ought to point out to the railway workers that, if the Government had not taken possession of the Treasury benches, their opponents—judging by their remarks—would not have allowed them to go to the Arbitration Court, and, therefore, it would have been more than likely that they would be on low rates of pay. He remembered when men had to work very hard on the railways for 6s. a day, and there was no guarantee that they would not have been receiving similar pay to-day if the Opposition had remained in power. In the North the railway men seemed perfectly satisfied, and were very anxious that the Government should remain in power; nor did he have any complaints from the primary producers in regard to freights on primary products; and the General Manager of the Northern Railways made special reference to the fact that the Northern railways depended upon primary products for their support. He would like

to know what the Opposition meant by political control.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You are not so innocent as you seem.

Mr. COLLINS: When the hon. member for Drayton sat behind the Government, no doubt he pulled the strings on behalf of his friends; that could not be said of the hon. member for Bowen. He had not seen the political control that the hon. member talked so much about. Did hon. members opposite mean that members on the Government side had been able to get their friends into the service?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Some of them, anyhow.

Mr. COLLINS: Even if they did, if they rendered good service to the State—to use the phrase of the leader of the Nationalists—what complaint had hon. members on the other side to make? Did they mean that the Minister should exercise no control?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Oh, no; that is quite different.

Mr. COLLINS: Did they mean that the whole control should be handed over to the Commissioner? As a representative of democracy, he was opposed to bureaucracy, because that was what it meant. If they were going to hand over the rights of the representatives of the people to Commissioners here and Commissioners there, they would be building up a bureaucracy which later on the democracy would have to set out to fight. He believed that the Minister should be held responsible, not the Commissioner; and, if any hon. member could make out a good case, no doubt the Minister would listen to it. He had always claimed, since he had been in Parliament, that, after he had made due inquiry, his word, as that of a representative of the people, should be taken before that of any Government employee. He was not going to play second fiddle to any officer employed by the Government.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You are letting the cat out of the bag now.

Mr. COLLINS: He was not. He was stating their rights as representatives of the people against a bureaucracy. Members of Parliament got their power from the people; officials had to be appointed by the Government. He could look after railway matters in his electorate better than officials, because, if he did not know the requirements of the people he represented who did? That was not interfering with the discipline of the department. It was time hon. members realised where they were drifting as representatives of the people, not only in Queensland, but throughout the Commonwealth. He wanted no bureaucracy but a democracy, and it was a democracy that was now sitting on the Treasury benches—government of the people by the people. (Opposition laughter.) He was not finding fault with the Commissioner. If he possessed certain powers, let him exercise them. Did he say in his report that he did not have the control he should have under the Railways Act? It was time hon. members opposite ceased talking about political control, seeing that the interjection of the hon. member for Drayton was tantamount to an admission that he used to exercise political control when he sat behind the hon. member for Bulimba and other Ministers. What was really wrong with the House was indicated by the hon. member for

Mr. Collins:

Nanango, who admitted that he knew nothing about the Northern railway system. It was just about time the Government considered the question of placing on the Estimates sufficient money to give all members who had not visited North Queensland an opportunity of seeing its wonderful resources and development, and the wonderful railway system they had in a sparsely populated part of the State.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The hon. member for Bowen had given them an idea of "how to do it." He gathered from the hon. member that, if the Railway Commissioner or someone else in authority did not do certain things after having been asked twice, the word of a member was to be taken against the word of everyone else.

MR. COLLINS: I said "after making inquiry."

HON. W. H. BARNES: He further understood the hon. member to say that it was against the tenets of the Labour party for the Commissioner and the officers of the railways to have supreme control. Under that system a great deal might depend upon the wisdom and knowledge of the Minister. A gentleman might be Minister who had very little knowledge of railways. He might be placed in an exceedingly awkward position if he were asked to do something which meant that the Commissioner would get a setback. On the other hand he could understand the position if a man of experience were at the head of the department. One could imagine in such a case that it would be the easiest thing in the world for the man of experience to deal with a question in an effective way, whereas an inexperienced Minister might find it exceedingly difficult.

The debate had been productive of a good deal of good, and he had followed some of the speeches with a very great deal of interest. For instance, the speech delivered by the hon. member for Mount Morgan was one of very great interest, and it opened up questions which linked the railways very closely with the lands of the State. It was very difficult to dissociate the discussion from land settlement. The question of good roads was also very closely allied with the railways. Some of them knew the awkward position of the people in the country who were distant from a railway. He remembered taking a trip on one occasion from Kingaroy over to Bell. There was some beautiful country in that district, and there were people living there miles and miles from a railway who were going in for agriculture, and they were placed at a very great disadvantage in regard to getting their produce to a railway. The country was black soil, and in wet weather it was almost impossible to travel over the roads. In order to develop the State, it was necessary to see that provision was made to provide good roads to the railways. He represented what might almost be called a city constituency, and yet it was not quite a city constituency. He held very emphatically the view that they were not going to have success in the city unless they had people comfortably settled on the land. If there was failure on the land, it must have a reflex influence on the city. The difficulty in getting traffic for the railways had been brought about by two things. One was the demand for shorter hours in the city. The result of such a demand had been to bring more people into the city and to leave fewer people in the

[*Mr. Collins.*

country to develop the land. It was the younger members of the community who gravitated towards the city, and who said to their parents that they were tired of the long hours associated with the agricultural industry.

MR. HARTLEY: That is nonsense. They cannot get enough land to settle on.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member was in the habit of making statements like that. The fact remained that those conditions were operating in Queensland. It was very important that the trunk lines of railway should be completed. The hon. member for Mount Morgan referred to the South Johnstone Mill, and rightly said that it was essential that Government lands which were available close to a railway should be used for developmental purposes.

MR. BRENNAN: What about private lands?

HON. W. H. BARNES: They must have development if they were going to make a success of the railway; but it must be remembered that there were large areas of land close to railways on which it was not possible to make a living. Seeing that they had got the railways, it was up to the Government to see if some scientific method could not be adopted to make those lands available for people to settle on.

MR. HARTLEY: That is more of your nonsense. What about "Bob Philp's" first-class land?

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not the delegation now. It was something about "Bob Philp" in another direction. The hon. member had got "Bob Philp" on the brain. Anyone travelling from Brisbane to Rockhampton would see that there was a quantity of inferior land alongside the railway, especially between Maryborough and Bundaberg. They had to realise that it was their duty to settle the good lands adjacent to the railways.

There was another question, which was a very big one in connection with the railways of Queensland. They must not lose sight of the fact that there were increasing dangers affecting their own State and the Commonwealth—dangers which could not be lightly looked upon. A very great deal of the development that had taken place in the North in connection with the sugar-mills was the outcome of the farseeing policy carried out by the previous Government.

MR. PEASE: You never completed them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Did not the previous Government build the central sugar-mills? The Liberal Government let the contract for the building of those mills.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the wisdom or otherwise of building those mills.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was referring to the sugar-mills by way of illustration.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member would be quite in order in doing that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Mount Morgan had suggested the South Johnstone mill should be duplicated.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Who selected that site?

HON. W. H. BARNES: A Royal Commission selected the site.

MR. PEASE: The site prevents the duplication of the mill.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They were dealing with the Northern Railway system, and it was the duty of every hon. member to add something to the debate to enable the department to meet its difficulties and increase its returns. He believed it was essential to build a railway right through to Cairns in the interests of the State, and he believed it was essential to build some of the feeding lines which were outlined years ago by the Liberal Government that could see ahead and were desirous of helping the great State of Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): To show the futility of the backyard policy of past Governments, they did not trouble very much about easier curves and grades for a railway, but built it just to suit individual interests. Take, for example, the line up the Range from Helidon to Toowoomba.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member can discuss the Northern Railways, but he cannot come back to the Southern Railways.

Mr. BRENNAN: He was going to show how the policy also applied to the North. Instead of going from Murphy's Creek into Toowoomba by a line of 3 or 4 miles, the line was built 28 miles round the Range. Then hon. members opposite talked about the wonderful engineering feat!

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How were you going to get up the 2,000 feet?

Mr. BRENNAN: It would be his duty for the next few years, as member for Toowoomba, to advocate a direct route from Helidon to Toowoomba. That same policy applied to the North. There was regrading going on in the North; and where there was regrading and the curves were sharp, it was because the engineers who built the line had a special interest in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing regrading and curves on this vote.

Mr. BRENNAN: The expense in the upkeep of their railways had been brought about by the backyard policy of past Governments.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: How do you know that?

Mr. BRENNAN: They knew that because they were told it. He was very much impressed by the speech by the hon. member for Mount Morgan, who spoke about a Federal Commission coming to Queensland to deal with the question of connecting up the Northern Territory with the South of Australia. The Premier should see that he got the officials of the department, and hon. members on both sides, to meet the Commission, to see that Queensland got the best concessions possible. The Federal Government, through the late Sir John Forrest, made an offer to connect North and South Australia, but the Denham Government would not accept the conditions in connection with connecting up with the Queensland railway system. He had not seen the report, but he understood that was true. The hon. member for Bulimba and the hon. member for Albert were members of the Denham Government.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Yes.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why did they not accept the suggestion of the late Sir John Forrest?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: That is exactly what we desire to bring about.

Mr. BRENNAN: It was an important matter. The hon. member for Mount Morgan was right, and he (Mr. Brennan) would give a small example to show how settlement had been impeded by the want of roads.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will discuss that matter from the aspect of the railways.

Mr. BRENNAN: If they had the roads, the railways would pay.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Who are going to pay for the roads?

Mr. BRENNAN: They must have good roads as feeders to the railways. He would give an example. Between Gowrie Junction and Kingsthorpe, a distance of 4 to 5 miles, farmers could not use the black soil road to the railway. He had got the Minister to come to Toowoomba, with the result that a siding was put in at Box Camp, and to-day there were eight or ten more farmers sending cream to the factory. That was on a closely settled portion of the Downs. That only showed what it meant to have good roads as feeders to their railways. He thought the hon. member for Mount Morgan, who had had more experience than most hon. members in the Committee, having travelled a greater portion of Queensland as chairman of the Public Works Commission, should be listened to. The hon. member had made an excellent speech, and he would like to hear other members of the Commission speak on the matter. They were men who could speak with authority, as they had travelled the country. The hon. member for Drayton could speak, but only of that portion over which he had travelled. The hon. member for Drayton had not travelled as far as he had over the State.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I have travelled more in Queensland than any six hon. members on the other side. (Government laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: He would like to hear the Railway Estimates discussed by every hon. member, and then have a Commission to dissect the speeches—taking out the cream of the speeches—and by that means they could get a system whereby the railways would pay. It was only speeches like that delivered by the hon. member for Mount Morgan—

Mr. EDWARDS: Do you agree with the hon. member for Mount Morgan that no further railways should be built?

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes. They should only build the absolutely necessary communications, but they should settle the land adjoining the railways. He did not agree with the hon. member for Bulimba that Crown lands should be settled. Private lands and freehold lands should be settled before they spent another penny on railway construction. There would be such a large population settled along the railways that they could stand them being run free. (Opposition laughter.) If they settled all the waste lands alongside the railways the income derived from such settlement would be greater than the whole of the present railway revenue. To-day for miles and miles they would see one sheep or one beast. No wonder the railways did not pay! If the country was closely settled, the wealth would be so great that there would be no need to charge freight on the railways.

Mr. FLETCHER: The railways are in a fair way to being settled now.

Mr. Brennan.]

Mr. BRENNAN: Nothing could be said by hon. members opposite against the administration of the present Government. The only argument they had to offer was to circulate misrepresentation in the local papers each day. Those papers left out the practical speeches made by members on the Government side of the Chamber.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BRENNAN: When he got on to a most important matter he was taken off the trail by hon. members opposite, and he had to answer them by explaining the reason for it. At the present time they had just turned the corner, but in the future they would see what the Labour administration of the railways meant.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): It was very nice to hear hon. members advocating the building of good roads as feeders to the railways, but they could not build a good road for under £2,000 a mile. Who was going to find the money? Were the farmers in the country districts going to find it?

The CHAIRMAN: I would like the hon. member for Drayton and other hon. members to remember that I cannot permit a discussion of a roads policy on this vote. I have permitted hon. members to discuss the desirability of making roads as feeders to railway lines, and thereby increasing the railway revenue, but I am not going to permit a discussion of the Main Roads Board on this vote.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The roads which were to act as feeders to the railways could not be built without money.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be in order in referring to that on the vote for the Main Roads Board.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Very well. He wished to refer to the deficits on the railways in the North as well as elsewhere.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Northern Division.

At 2.32 p.m.,

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

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Nanango advocated the equalising of the railway rates in the country and the cities in order to meet the deficits, and hon. members opposite tried to make out that the hon. member advocated a general rise in rates, but the hon. member did nothing of the sort. They had been asked to make business propositions in connection with the railways. One way was to equalise the rates in the coastal cities and the country in order to bring about a better financial state of affairs.

Mr. PEASE: But that would not suit the farmers up North. They are on the lowest rates.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Their rates were double what they were in the cities.

Mr. PEASE: They are not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: If the hon. member would examine the schedule of freights and fares for a distance of 10 or 20 miles around Brisbane, and compare them with those in his electorate, he would see what the difference was. If the rates were equalised, the financial position would be very different.

[*Mr. Brennan.*]

Reference had been made to the opening up of land alongside the railways, and there were large areas of land which could be opened up in the North, as well as in the Southern and Central districts. They were asked to borrow money at high rates of interest to build railways into the country, and as soon as those railways brought in revenue that money was sent down to the cities to be spent, and the country districts got no benefit from it. The people on the land paid in taxation, rent, and other expenses no less than £2,071,374, the whole of which was expended in the cities.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How is that made up?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would give the item in connection with land tax for last year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It comes from the cities. The farmers only contributed 4.6 per cent. of the land taxation.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They collected £1,500,000 from country lands through the Lands Department—

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Pastoral lands, you mean.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: And why should that money be spent in the cities? Why could they not spend £500,000 of it to build country railways?

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would point out to the hon. member that the question under discussion is not the building of railways, but the administration of the Railway Department.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Secretary for Railways said that the starving stock rates were the lowest imposed by any Government. He would remind the hon. gentleman that he had left it until the last drought was nearly over before he reduced the rates.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: No. What month was the reduction made in?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He could not say what month.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You should be fair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He had had more than one conversation with the hon. gentleman, and pointed out that, while stock were dying in the coastal areas, within 150 miles of the coast there were empty stock trains running out North and North-west the whole of the time. Those trains might have carried their starving stock at low rates, but, instead of that, the cattle were left to die by thousands. The Minister had left it too long before he reduced the rates.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You are entirely wrong.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When he did reduce them, he only gave credit for the reduction.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I did not. You are wrong again. We reduced the rates absolutely. It was not a rebate.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Government were a long time before they gave any concession at all, and then they only gave a rebate as a credit for a time.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: You should get the facts before you make those statements.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Agricultural Department claims the freights now. I will show you the letter if you like.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: When the drought was breaking up, he met the Minister in George street, and impressed on him the difficulties of the man on the land through the stock dying, and soon after that the hon. gentleman altered the rates; he would give him credit for that; but, it was nearly at the close of the drought before any concession was made.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): He did not wish to delay the vote, but he thought that, as a Northern member, he might say a few words. He wished to see the vote go through as soon as possible, in order to get to the construction vote, about which more could be said. He would like the Minister to tell them when they would have the through train to Mackay without having to change carriages at Rockhampton. The line was now open, but he understood from travellers that they had to change carriages at Rockhampton. They had to pay £1 per night over and above all other charges; and on such long journeys, when they had to spend two nights in the train, every convenience and facility should be afforded.

A good deal had been said about the disastrous financial position of the railways. Year after year, in spite of record revenues, they found themselves getting further and further behind. So far as they could gauge the position by the two opening months, the present financial year promised to be even worse than its predecessors. He had the monthly figures in regard to the railways for July and August, 1921, and he found that for those two months, while the revenue of the department showed a decrease of over £87,000, the expenses had increased by over £38,000. It seemed to him that, no ratio was preserved between the work done and the expenditure. It must be recognised that there was a limit to that sort of thing. There were various ways of dealing with the position. He was not one who desired to cut down wages below a fair thing. He thought a lot of unnecessary extras had been piled up which perhaps were not due to the fault of the Minister or the administration. One solution of the difficulty was to give the railways more to do by increasing settlement on areas adjacent to railway lines on which agriculture could be carried on. In that regard, the Railway Department and Lands Department should work in collaboration. They should see that the plough was used to a greater extent. Under the present Administration, unfortunately, that had not been brought about. In fact, they knew the area of land under cultivation was decreasing. They would have to take two or three departments into consideration when discussing the matter. Before Parliament met again the Minister might discuss such question with his colleagues, and see if something could be done to improve the position. He hoped they would have time to discuss the construction branch of this department. If they were given the opportunity, some interesting revelations would be made.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (*Hon. J. Larcombe, Keppel*): The hon. member for Queenton had mentioned the matter of engine power and lighting in North Queensland, and urged the necessity for improvement in the North. He (*Mr. Larcombe*) expected the question had been

handled up in the North in the same way as it was being handled at Ipswich at the present time. The number of engines in dock for repair at Ipswich was not as great now as it was in January, and they had a number of locomotives on order. The matter of lighting would receive consideration.

It was astonishing to him to listen to the gloomy propaganda so sedulously propagated by hon. members opposite. They had had a full debate on the first vote, and they should have allowed this vote to go through.

Mr. VOWLES: Your own members did not let it go through.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Only one or two Government members had spoken, and they had done so under provocation in order to reply to criticisms which had come from hon. members opposite. There should be no limit to the discussion, but all the votes had been well discussed on that for "General Establishment."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You did not let us have any discussion last year.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They had got it this year. Hon. members opposite had led the public to believe that they were going to make interesting revelations, but they had not made any. The fact of the Government having brought on these estimates, as requested, had nullified and deadened any criticism that might have applied to the Railway Department. Speeches had been made pro and con, and no doubt the public would be astonished at the sound case of the Government and the paucity of the criticism of the Opposition regarding the railway administration. To his mind, on this occasion the Government had really put the Opposition on their defence. They had said to the Opposition, "What is your policy for improving railway administration, if you assert that it is unsatisfactory?" The reply from various members had been—(1) increase fares and freights; (2) reduce wages; (3) curtail the staff; (4) cut down the train services.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. You have something worse than a bad memory now. That is an incorrect statement.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The hon. member for Albert in 1918 advocated increasing fares and freights; and that hon. member repeated that statement on the previous day. The leader of the Nationalist party was fair and honourable in his attitude; but he advocated increased fares and freights and a policy to which the Government did not subscribe, and which he (*Mr. Larcombe*) contended was not a sound policy to pursue. Other hon. members, perturbed at the outspoken utterance of the leader of the Nationalist party, had hastened to suggest that they could not agree with their leader; but what had they to say about the remarks of the hon. member for Albert and of the hon. member for Port Curtis? The criticism of the Railway Estimates by the Opposition was insignificant in comparison with the necessity for explanation by the Opposition of their attitude on the four points he had laid down. The Government had a sound policy of keeping fares and freights down to a reasonable minimum, and also of keeping the staff down to a reasonable minimum. (*Opposition laughter.*) It was well known that for the six years of Labour administration the increase in the

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number of employees was not as great as it was during the last three years of Tory administration.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: But we made the railways pay.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Hon. members could not get away from the fact that there was sound and efficient management of the department at the present time. It was true that there had been a slight reduction in train mileage as compared with the last year the hon. member was in power, but the fact remained that, on the test of employees, the railway administration of the Government stood pre-eminently justified in comparison with that of their opponents. It would take hon. members on the other side all the recess to explain away the insidious policy they had promulgated during the debate.

Mr. FLETCHER: Will you tell the electors all that we said?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He would quote the whole of the evidence—the whole of the truth. The discussion had been of very great interest, not only to hon. members, but also to the country, which wanted to know what the Opposition would substitute for the present railway administration.

Mr. VOWLES: Efficiency.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: It would take them all the recess to explain away the four items he had outlined. Hon. members expected that their remarks would go into "Hansard," and that there would be no reply by Government members, but the Government were not going to allow that to happen.

Mr. FLETCHER: We offered useful suggestions.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Any constructive suggestion would be taken into account by the department, but he was speaking particularly of the four principal lines of policy which the Opposition advocated as those which they would enforce if they got into power.

The leader of the Nationalist party had got back to the question of the deficits. Time and again he (Mr. Larcombe) had pointed out that railway deficiencies existed in Queensland before the Labour party came into power, and that they existed to an enormous extent in Tory-governed States in other parts of the world. Why did hon. members opposite base their arguments on the assumption that Tory rule meant no railway deficiencies?

The leader of the Nationalist party referred to a scheme which the General Manager of the Northern Railways had recommended with regard to working employees, and which had not been approved. It was not accepted because the Commissioner was not satisfied that there was sufficient evidence to justify his endorsing it. The scheme, briefly, was to lay off employees after they had earned a certain wage for the year. That might mean that married men with families would have to lie off and single men be taken on, and, moreover, although the scheme might equalise the distribution of the income over more men, it might not make for efficiency. They must treat with respect any suggestions from the General Manager, because he was a good and efficient officer,

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but the Commissioner did not approve of his scheme in that case.

Regarding matters of policy, if the Minister or Cabinet had any say, they would not shirk responsibility. It was recognised that the Cabinet had some say in deciding what freights and fares should be. It was astonishing that this dual control policy to which hon. members opposite objected was laid down in the Railway Act, not by the Labour party, but by their opponents.

Mr. MOORE interjected.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: He was not responsible for what outside people might say. Propaganda was circulated, not only in the Press, but also in the trains, streets, and elsewhere. There was always somebody to whisper subtly poisonous propaganda against the Labour Government, and the more untruthful, the more valuable it frequently was for the Opposition. Hon. members could talk in a general way of what they heard in the street, but they offered no proof in support of their statements.

He wished to refer to the action of the hon. member for Bulimba. When the hon. member was Secretary for Public Works, he exercised Ministerial interference. He stepped in and nullified a wages board award after it had been arrived at in a proper and legal manner. Let hon. members

[3 p.m.] explain away their own deficiencies. Why did they exercise political control? Why did they commit all the political sins of which they now accused the Labour party? To quote the words of Emerson, "Our opinion of others is a reflection of our own character." If they applied that argument to the criticisms of hon. members opposite, they had a very fair idea of what those hon. members would do if they were the governing party.

The hon. member for Drayton raised the question of starving stock rates, and he would like to make a reference to what was done as early as September, 1920, when the department made a 50 per cent. reduction in starving stock rates. Immediately the request was laid before the Railway Department they conceded what was requested. It naturally rested with those concerned to come along to the department, and when the Government were approached on the matter the request was carried into effect. He did not wish to claim any credit for it, but, on the other hand, hon. members opposite should not misrepresent the case. Hon. members opposite reminded him of Tomkins's dog—he did not say that in any offensive sense. Tomkins's dog howled when kept on a chain, and it was perfectly miserable when it was let loose. When the Government announced a surplus at the end of the financial year, Opposition members howled. Now that the Government had a railway deficit, hon. members opposite were perfectly miserable. He did not know what hon. members on the Government side of the Chamber would have to do in order to satisfy the Opposition. To quote Thackeray—

"Say what I will, do what I will, there are some who will hate me to the end of the chapter."

Hon. members opposite hated the present Administration, and nothing they could do would satisfy the Opposition. It did not matter how sound their policy was, it would be misrepresented and would be attacked.

The criticism of the deficit brought to his mind the words of Pope—

“Some figures monstrous and misshaped appear
 Considered singly and beheld too near,
 Which, but proportioned to their time and place,
 One distance reconciles to form and grace.”

There being considerable interruption,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members not to interrupt the speaker.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: If they took into consideration the whole of the facts elicited during the discussion, they realised that the word “deficit” had no terrifying significance at all. They recognised the enormous advantage the railways had been to the primary producer. The people of the State, on more than one occasion, had indicated their confidence in the Government, and he was satisfied that, when the opportunity occurred again, they would again show their confidence in Labour administration.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The hon. member twitted the Opposition with having utterly failed to justify their criticism. At any rate, they had brought before the people of Queensland what the position really was in regard to the railways. He had only to repeat the figures that had been quoted already to justify what he was saying. They had shown that the Railway Department in 1915-1916 returned a profit of over £48,000. The first year the Labour party took control of affairs, the railways showed a loss of over £500,000. The next year they showed a loss of £750,000; in 1917-1918 they showed a loss of over £1,000,000; in 1918-1919 they showed a loss of £1,100,000; in 1919-1920 they show a loss, roughly, of £1,250,000; last year they showed a loss of £1,750,000; and, judging by what was going on, this year they were going to show a loss of over £2,000,000. Could any greater justification of the criticism of the Opposition be quoted than those figures? And all that the hon. gentleman had been able to advance as a means towards making ends meet was the confiscation of five-sixths of incomes in Queensland to pay the cost of running that department. Boiled down, the only solution the Minister had been able to offer was the confiscation of practically the whole of the incomes of the people of Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): He rose to a point of order. He wanted the hon. member to withdraw the statement that he had advocated the confiscation of incomes. He had never mentioned the word “confiscation” or the word “income.”

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. member will withdraw the words to which the Minister takes exception.

Mr. SWAYNE: He withdrew, but at the same time he would point out that the Minister most certainly expressed the opinion that that great utility should not be a revenue-producing utility, and he discussed the question of whether it should not be made free.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Withdraw! Withdraw!

Mr. STOPFORD: You are “crayfishing.”

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member has withdrawn, and I must

ask the hon. member for Mount Morgan to cease these interruptions, otherwise I must take some other action.

Mr. SWAYNE: According to the taxation returns, the total incomes in Queensland amounted to £12,000,000, so that, if the hon. member's proposal was carried into effect, it would absorb five-sixths of the total incomes of Queensland in order to run the Railways Department, which costs, with interest and working expenses together, £7,000,000; that, added to the £3,000,000 already taken by direct taxation, bore out what he said; and, therefore, he had some justification for what he said. Seeing that there were so many other departments being run at a loss, if the whole policy of Queensland was to be moulded on those lines, it would take more than Queensland earned to pay the cost of Government departments as run by the hon. gentlemen opposite.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

CHIEF OFFICE.

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

“That £21,679 be granted for ‘Department of Justice—Chief Office.’”

He would be pleased to give any information hon. members might desire.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): He would like some information in respect of the increased fees charged in the Real Property Office for the registration of documents. He would like to know, first of all, what justification there was for the increase. It was claimed that it was additional taxation on land transactions.

Mr. BRENNAN: Have you got a list of the fees?

Mr. VOWLES: He had them in his head, which was the proper place to have them. This was additional land taxation and a recurring taxation on every transaction that a man had with his land. In the past the fees were reasonable, but now in some cases they had been increased by 100 per cent., and there did not seem to be any statutory authority, so far as he could see, for those increases. He would like the Minister to state the authority for the increases, and let them know at whose suggestion that additional taxation upon the public was arrived at.

In connection with the vote under discussion, he noticed that three clerks have been dispensed with, but the vote was slightly larger than it was last year.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is owing to automatic increases.

Mr. VOWLES: There were various matters that should be discussed in connection with the vote. One was the system of gambling which was so prevalent in Queensland to-day. He hoped they would be able to get some details of the balance-sheets and other matters in connection with the “Golden Casket.”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That does not come under this department. It comes under the Home Department.

Mr. VOWLES: Did the Attorney-General not issue a permit for the “Golden Casket?”

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: No.

Mr. VOWLES: There was no statutory authority for carrying it on. If it was not carried on with the authority of the hon. gentleman, it was a breach pure and simple

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of the Suppression of Gambling Act. He thought that the person responsible and who should answer the questions that the public required answers to was the Attorney-General, who was the person responsible for granting permits. He did not care what department or subdepartment had the real control or management of the "Golden Casket," to his mind the department which should be attacked was the department responsible for its existence, and that apparently was the Department of Justice.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Quite wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: He thought he was right, and that the carrying on of the "Golden Casket" must be wrong. It was not only the principle that he was taking exception to, but the fact that for the large amount of money that was being handled no balance-sheet was presented to the public.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman should have discussed the administration of the "Golden Casket" under the Home Secretary's vote.

Mr. VOWLES: That opportunity had slipped past.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You can do it again on the Supplementary Estimates. It was discussed on the Home Secretary's vote to some extent.

Mr. VOWLES: Were any details or any balance-sheets given?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. VOWLES: It appeared to him that there was some reason why these things should be covered up.

Mr. PEASE: What does the Auditor-General say?

The CHAIRMAN: I wish the hon. member would obey my ruling. This matter was mentioned on the Home Secretary's vote. Several hon. members discussed it, and, if the hon. member wished to discuss the administration or the objects to which the money was devoted, he could have discussed them on the Home Secretary's Estimates. There is no objection to the hon. member discussing the granting of a permit or the non-granting of a permit under this vote.

Mr. VOWLES: It was the question of a permit that he wanted to discuss. All these things should be aboveboard. If it was being carried on, and a lot of money was being handled without any legal authority, there was something wrong. Somebody should take the responsibility, and the person responsible was the Attorney-General.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Quite wrong.

Mr. VOWLES: He could not understand it. The Suppression of Gambling Act stated that sweeps should not be carried on, and the only departure from that principle was when the Attorney-General granted a permit. Apparently the "Golden Casket" was being carried on in an illegal way, and should be closed down that very afternoon. The whole thing was surrounded with mystery. There was no permit and no parliamentary authority for its being carried on. Who was responsible for its being carried on?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The Government.

Mr. VOWLES: What right had the Government to carry it on without the authority of the Attorney-General, and what right had they to break the law? There should be a permit.

[Mr. Vowles.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Don't you know that the Attorney-General is a member of the Government, and, therefore, he acquiesced in the permit being given?

Mr. VOWLES: He was afraid the Attorney-General had acquiesced in a lot of other things that were not right. He did not oppose the principle personally, because he took a ticket in the Golden Casket occasionally, and he would like to win it if he could, but the thing should be run aboveboard and there should not be the suspicion in connection with it that existed outside the Chamber.

There were matters in various branches that he would discuss as he went along. He supposed that the Magistrates Courts Bill would come before the Chamber at a later stage. The Attorney-General had received a deputation of bailiffs from various country places asking that consideration should be given with respect to certain fees, and he thought the Attorney-General had made certain promises to that deputation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes. That will be covered by the Magistrates Courts Bill. The schedule of fees under the Small Debts Court will be repealed by the Bill, and the fees will be provided for under rules of court.

Mr. VOWLES: The bailiff in Dalby was a member of that deputation.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The fees are very small.

Mr. VOWLES: They were so small that it was almost impossible to get a proper man to carry out the duties of bailiff.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They are only part-time officers.

Mr. VOWLES: They were part-time officers to the extent that they got a retainer, and part of it was going to be taken away because there were no civil juries to be summoned in the future, and, when the public required the services of a bailiff, they expected him to be constantly in attendance to serve processes of court. He had always claimed that those fees should be increased, particularly in the country, where the cost of living was higher than in the city. He was glad to know that consideration was going to be extended in that regard under the rules of court to be issued under the Magistrates Courts Bill.

Mr. KING (Logan): He noticed from the Estimates that the travelling expenses of the judges of the Supreme Court were put down at £1,000, an increase of £100 on last year's vote. That was only a small amount, but it was rather strange that it should be placed on the Estimates, in view of the argument used by the Attorney-General in the debate on the Supreme Court Bill that the judges would be called upon to travel a good deal less than had been the case in the past, and the Central and Northern judges would be fixtures in Rockhampton and Townsville.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We expect that there will be a saving, but we have to base the Estimates on those of last year. We will not spend all that money; I can assure you there will be a saving.

Mr. KING: He hoped there would be a saving, as he understood the judges would be called upon to travel less. The amount was so small that it was not worth bothering about, but it was used as an argument in connection with the Supreme Court Bill.

With regard to the expenses for lotteries, he was surprised to hear, when the leader of

the Opposition was speaking, that there were no permits whatever granted in connection with the Golden Casket lottery, which was under the jurisdiction of the Home Secretary. The Secretary for Public Lands said that the Department of Justice acquiesced in it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I said the Attorney-General acquiesced in it.

Mr. KING: If a permit was not given, the Attorney-General had no right to acquiesce in it.

The HOME SECRETARY: What is the use of the Government granting a permit to themselves?

Mr. KING: The law ought to be followed. The Criminal Code was very distinct on the matter. Section 234 provided—

“Any person who opens, keeps or uses, any place for carrying on a lottery of any kind whatever, is guilty of a misdemeanour, and is liable to imprisonment with hard labour for three years.

“The term ‘lottery’ includes any scheme or device for the sale, gift, disposal, or distribution of any property depending upon or to be determined by lot or chance, whether by the throwing or casting of dice, or the drawing of tickets, cards, lots, numbers, or figures, or by means of a wheel or trained animal, or otherwise howsoever.

“This section does not apply to any lottery which has obtained the sanction of a Crown Law Officer.”

Mr. BRENNAN: That refers to a person.

Mr. KING: Was not the Home Secretary a person? Did he not carry on the business of a lottery for his department? In 1919 the late Mr. Ryan laid down certain rules for the guidance of the Attorney-General in the granting of permits to carry on lotteries, such permits only being granted for lotteries in connection with charitable and educational institutions and also for the benefit of persons in necessitous circumstances. He did not think that permits should be granted for any indiscriminate purposes outside those laid down by the late Mr. Ryan. It was only encouraging gambling, which they did not want to do in Queensland.

Mr. BRENNAN: Look at the gambling on the stock exchange.

Mr. KING: Persons on the stock exchange were men of mature years, who could choose for themselves, and, if they made mistakes, they had to put up with the consequences. He objected to youngsters being encouraged to gamble. Cases had been mentioned in the Committee of youngsters fourteen or fifteen years of age robbing their employers' stamp boxes, in order to get 5s. to put into a lottery. That should not be encouraged in a civilised community.

The HOME SECRETARY: You mentioned men of mature age. What about the old chap, Stanfield, in the Curator's Department, who got away with £3,000 or £4,000?

Mr. KING: He would have to put up with the consequences; he was old enough to know what the result of his action would be, but a youngster was not. Youngsters should not be tempted to take tickets in those lotteries.

The HOME SECRETARY: I would favourably consider the blocking of persons under a certain age from going in for the “Golden Casket.”

Mr. BRENNAN: Do you take tickets in the “Golden Casket”?

Mr. KING: He had never done it yet. He was not claiming any virtue, but he did not do it simply because he had youngsters round him, and he did not want to set them a bad example. He recognised that the authorities were trying to put down street gambling. He noticed that the Attorney-General, in reply to a question, said that before any more prosecutions took place he would get further evidence.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The police got a batch last week.

Mr. KING: It struck him that they got a batch of poor Chinamen. They prosecuted persons who did not know any better.

The HOME SECRETARY: We got a batch of Britishers.

Mr. KING: They deserved it, because they ought to know better. He wanted to read the following paragraph in the Police Commissioner's report in regard to gambling:—

“Action has been taken, with considerable success, to prevent the further spread of street-betting in Brisbane, and in outside places the police have been active in attempts to prevent illegal gambling. While it appears to be impossible to completely eliminate the tendency to gambling from the community, I am hopeful of eradicating it from public places and from places where the absence of publicity and supervision gives opportunity for the introduction of undesirable elements and practices, quite apart from gaming as such. I should gladly welcome an addition to the present statutory authority dealing with the suppression of gambling.”

He would commend the last sentence to the notice of the Attorney-General, and he hoped that the hon. gentleman would bring in legislation as soon as possible to give the police the power they were asking for to suppress the vice of gambling.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): One matter of vital importance to North Queensland concerning which the Attorney-General had given consideration in the past, but which he would like to refer to now, was cyclone insurance. On 5th July, 1920, a deputation waited on the Attorney-General in Townsville with regard to the matter, and the hon. gentleman said that he would give it early consideration. This was a matter of vital importance to the development and safety of North Queensland, and he would be pleased if the Attorney-General could give them definite information as to the action which it was intended to take in the near future. The matter had caused a great deal of worry to the people in the North. That portion of the State was subject to an invasion from the East, and they should protect and encourage the people there by every possible means; and the more populous portion of the State should share in the burdens of the North in that direction.

He was absolutely opposed to the “Golden Casket.” Hon. members stood for protecting the children in their State institutions and surrounding them with good [3.30 p.m.] influences. The Director of State Children laid down that principle when placing them in the various homes. He would read the remarks of the Deputy Premier of New South Wales (Mr. McGirr, Minister of Health), on 20th July, 1920—

“My personal view is that the public

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State lottery would not be for the benefit of the people as a whole. For example, in Italy and in other countries in which a State lottery is carried out, degrading effects are found on women and other sections of the community, who will put their last 5s. in the lottery in order that they may win by chance an easy method of existence. They cannot be blamed for this; but, at the same time, from a government point of view, it has, more or less, a demoralising effect on the community."

Mr. PEASE: And everybody winks at Adams's sweeps.

Mr. GREEN: They did not. Adams's sweeps and all others should be prevented. The Federal authorities were lax in connection with that matter. The action of the Queensland Government had a demoralising effect on the community as a whole, and on the young people particularly. If they could not finance their hospitals without degrading the State and demoralising the community, it was a disgrace to the State. He was very pleased to hear the Home Secretary say that he would take action so that children under a certain age should not have the temptation placed in their way.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: There is a prohibition now.

Mr. GREEN: Information had been given to him that a stamp had been impressed on certain State school literature, saying "Buy Golden Casket tickets."

Mr. F. A. COOPER: By some agent.

Mr. GREEN: Not by the Government, certainly—by some agent.

The HOME SECRETARY: Give us that agent's name.

Mr. GREEN: He thought he would be able to obtain it. They should protect the youth of the State from such demoralising and degrading influences. If the Government were determined to carry on the "Golden Casket," he hoped every care would be taken to preserve and protect the children.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Alberr*): He trusted the Attorney-General would afford the Committee some explanation regarding the increased fees in the Real Property Office. Those fees had been increased in some instances by from 400 per cent. to 500 per cent. He had been at a loss to discover the justification for it. So far as he was able to read, it required an amendment of the Act before those increased fees could be charged. The original fees showed a profit, and the present increases practically meant excessive taxation. Possibly it might not press so heavily upon those engaged in land transactions and speculations in the city, but it did press heavily upon the primary producers, and more particularly the small men who purchased farms and other property to carry on their work.

Prior to the administration of the Stamp Office by the present Government, in connection with an agreement for the sale of land on which terms were given, the amount of stamp duty charged was 2s. 6d., and only upon the completion of the full payment of the consideration money and the lodging of the transfer at the Titles Office was the full amount of stamp duty charged. Now the full amount was charged immediately upon the agreement for sale being made. This also pressed hardly upon the smaller men,

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who, in some instances, experienced difficulty in raising the amount of deposit to be paid on the purchase of a farm or grazing area.

He would like the Attorney-General to give some attention to those two matters and explain why the alterations had been made, and, in the first instance, under what authority.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): He was surprised to hear that the Attorney-General had not given a permit with regard to the "Golden Casket."

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In other words, issue a permit to myself?

Mr. MOORE: Quite right. The Government had no more right to break the law than a private individual. The Government had broken the law on other occasions, and had set a bad example to the people of the State.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why did you not have us arrested? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: He wished he had known of it before, and he might have taken that action; and then the Government's majority would be gone. (Renewed laughter.) The Chairman of Committees also was in a dubious position, because of his connection with a gambling concern like this. He (Mr. Moore) objected to gambling devices of any description. The "Golden Casket" exercised a demoralising influence, and did no good to the State. It was all humbug to say that "Tattersall" would get the whole of the money. They would not. The "Golden Caskets" had been developed to such a stage that they filled up once a fortnight. No doubt, the hospitals obtained funds from that source, but that did not compensate for the moral effect it was having on the people. Permits had been granted throughout the length and breadth of Queensland for all sorts of gambling devices—"spinning jennies," "under and over seven," and other devices. They were held at shows and country sports.

The HOME SECRETARY: The police can stop those.

Mr. MOORE: The police did not stop them.

Mr. PEASE: They stopped them in Townsville.

Mr. MOORE: That might be. Perhaps the same instructions were not given to the police throughout the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are the chief inducement for people to attend.

The HOME SECRETARY: Mention one show where "spinning jennies" have been run, and I will promise to get you a report.

Mr. MOORE: At the Toowoomba Show, and at two small sports meetings out from Jondaryan.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They had no authority from my department.

Mr. MOORE: They ran them; and it was not in one place only; it was at every show.

The HOME SECRETARY: The show people have the right to exclude those people.

Mr. MOORE: After the last Toowoomba show the committee decided to put a stop to these fellows going on the ground; but

it should not be left to the show committee to decide whether a gambling stunt should be allowed.

The HOME SECRETARY: If a man carries on gambling in a private house, how are the police to know?

Mr. MOORE: This was done in public places. They had legislation to prevent gambling, and it was allowed to go on in public places. He was glad to see that the "Liberty Fairs" and the "Allies' City" had been stopped.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you agree with the "tote"?

Mr. MOORE: He believed in the "tote" on the racecourse; but he did not believe in having these things stuck in the main streets, as they were to-day.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you not think the police should shift those "spinning jennies"?

Mr. MOORE: It depended on what power they had. He saw one man who had three different kinds of apparatus for gambling, and, when the police stopped one, he started another, and, when they stopped that, he started with an Australian cricketer throwing a ball into a little square. These were apparently legalised systems of gambling, but the Commissioner should have definite instructions that such forms of gambling were not to be carried on.

The HOME SECRETARY: All those illegal games of chance are stopped.

Mr. MOORE: They called them games of skill, such as throwing balls into holes with different prices on them. He supposed that would be called a game of skill, but it had just the same effect as an ordinary game of chance, although the police were out of court. He did not think such temptations should be placed in the way of persons who congregated in places of amusement. The sooner all these permits for art unions and similar lotteries were stopped the better. The Attorney-General last year sheltered himself under the plea that he gave permits to church bazaars. If that was so, it was time they were all wiped out. They found the police in Melbourne prosecuting a man for keeping a common gaming house because he sold "Golden Casket" tickets.

The HOME SECRETARY: Did you see that Tasmania is going to raise the charges on "Tattersall's" tickets?

Mr. MOORE: He hoped they would raise them till they were prohibitive. It was pure humbug to justify the "Golden Casket," because permits were issued for art unions or the disposal of works of art.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Fraud is a work of art, is it not? (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: Yes. One got books of tickets from all over the State from different people and shows, who announced that they were conducting art unions under a permit granted by the Attorney-General. It was a poor way for a country show to finance itself by an art union for a motor-car.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is the same system that has been in operation in Queensland for years.

Mr. MOORE: That might be; but it had developed during the last few years to tremendous proportions. He had heard members with the same political opinions as the Home Secretary, not only in Brisbane but

also in Toowoomba, expressing the opinion that opportunities for gambling should not be made so accessible.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowoong*): He believed that an hour would be well spent in reminding the Government of the evils that were caused in the community by these opportunities for gambling. The Commissioner for Police, in his report, had said—

"I should gladly welcome an addition to the present statutory authority dealing with the suppression of gambling."

He was not going to say that they on the Opposition side possessed all the virtues, for he was prepared to admit that many men on the other side agreed that it was absolutely essential that some steps should be taken to prevent the community, particularly the younger portion of it, from rushing headlong to destruction in the way they were doing. The hon. member for Townsville had said that, with a view to preventing harm to the young, the practice should be stopped; he would go farther and say that they should stop it in the interests of the middle-aged and elderly as well. They should do all they could to prevent anyone from falling in the way the Home Secretary had indicated one unfortunate man had done in squandering public money on horse racing. One of the curses in the community was the prevalence of entertainments like "Liberty Fair." He had had his eyes opened very widely in respect to a "Liberty Fair" at which the City council got a guarantee that there would be no gambling. He had received a great many letters to the effect that a considerable number of persons in the Valley area were wasting their money and the scenes were demoralising; and he went to have a look at it himself. He could assure hon. members that the scene was fit to make angels weep, let alone an ordinary individual. He saw young people investing their shillings, and grown men losing the whole of their week's wages and afraid to go home because they knew they had been doing wrong. The law was evaded by putting up a box of chocolates as the prize; but, if the individual did not want the box of chocolates, he took it to a little office and got the value of it in money. Ducks and other things were disposed of in the same manner. Any institution or any organisation that depended on such means as that for its support was on a rotten foundation, and hon. members were only doing their duty in taking every step they could to stop that kind of thing.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Did the City council not grant the use of their ground for that?

Mr. MAXWELL: No. As was generally done, an application was made to the Brisbane City council asking if they had any objection to certain things going on on a certain area of land that they had rented from certain people. There was a distinct contract entered into with the applicants and the council that there would be no gambling of any kind. As soon as the Brisbane City council found out that gambling was being carried on they immediately stopped it.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: How long was it running?

Mr. MAXWELL: He could not say; but it did not run twenty-four hours after he had been on the ground to look at it. It was a disgrace to the community, and he would be

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sorry for any Government that associated itself with anything like that. An interjection had been hurled across the Chamber about sending money to "Tattersall." He had heard it said that by having the "Golden Casket" here the money was kept in Queensland, instead of being sent to "Tattersall's" sweeps. The reason why legislation was passed in this State against "Tattersall's" sweeps was on account of the damage it was doing to the young of the community. He wanted to impress upon the Government the desirability of dealing with the curse that they had in their midst to-day, and to try and save some of the young people from going to destruction. He would like the first opportunity of taking any hon. member, he did not care how big a sport he might be, to some of these fairs, and, if that hon. member would agree that it was legitimate sport, he could not agree with him. Naturally, the Government were responsible for issuing permits, irrespective of what any show committee might do. Applications had been made on behalf of a certain institution he was associated with to run certain fairs or sports on the fifty-fifty or sixty-fifty basis. Those proposals had all been turned down. To a certain extent, the show committee were to blame for allowing those people to enter their grounds. They must get down to bedrock, and to the department which issued the permit, and that was the department which the Attorney-General controlled.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I can assure the hon. member that no permits are being issued for anything of that kind.

Mr. MAXWELL: He was glad to know that, and he hoped the Attorney-General would, at the first opportunity, go round some of those places and see for himself the evil that existed in their midst. He was sure that, if the hon. gentleman did so, he would be of the opinion that, if there was any necessity for a Government to interfere, it was now.

He had dealt with the question of street gambling, and had the assurance of the Attorney-General that he would deal with it. He would give an assurance of how people valued a stand in a lane in the city.

The HOME SECRETARY: Have they not got the use of land belonging to the hon. member?

Mr. MAXWELL: No; he owned no lane.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who owns that land?

Mr. MAXWELL: The land was owned by the Hon. Peter Murphy and the executrix of the late Mr. O'Connor. He had absolutely no control over the land. The Home Secretary had said so himself.

The HOME SECRETARY: Would the hon. member give me permission to allow the police to clear everybody out of the lane?

Mr. MAXWELL: He would give the Home Secretary the assurance that he would do his very best, so far as his shop was concerned. To show the amount of money that was being made, to the detriment of the young people of the community, he would state that one man refused £1,000 to allow another man to conduct his gambling business in a certain lane. It was not possible to buy all lanes; but they could buy a portion of the area that was not being handed over to the local authority, but which was an easement leading to one of the premises on the

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land. That place was bought, and they actually rigged up a booth for the purpose of carrying on their betting scheme.

The HOME SECRETARY: Do you know that the Hamilton Town Council are receiving rental from a place used for betting?

Mr. MAXWELL: He believed that that council charged some person a rental of £250 for building a grandstand.

The HOME SECRETARY: Not to build a grandstand, but to bet.

Mr. MAXWELL: He did not stand for that. Both the Department of Justice and the Home Department were interested in this matter, and both should work together and do their very best to prevent this. No matter what the Hamilton Town Council or the Brisbane City Council did, if it was wrong, it was wrong.

The HOME SECRETARY: If the police can get permission, we will clear that lane out in ten minutes.

Mr. MAXWELL: He would give permission so far as his portion of the lane was concerned. He had seen so many people on the land behind his place of business that it was almost impossible to transact his business with people of that class about. There were sometimes as many as 500 gathered on the land. He was bringing the matter forward again, and he would support it by a request to the Commissioner of Police. It was absolutely necessary for some legislation, or that increased power should be given to prevent this menace continuing in their midst. He was satisfied that the discussion that had taken place that afternoon would do good.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): He had listened to the discussion on the prevention of gambling. He knew a man who wanted to prevent something taking place in a street where he had his business premises, and he drove his cart up and down the place all the time, and kept the crowd back. He believed that the hon. member for Toowoong would be able to drive his cart in and out of the lane where he had the right of entry, and keep the crowd out. The hon. member, like other hon. members opposite, reminded him of the lines from that celebrated mock-heroic, satirical poem of Samuel Butler, where he said something about the people who—

"Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to."

The hon. member for Oxley sneered at American money, yet he sold American motor parts.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That is not correct, and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: Hon. members opposite objected to the "Golden Casket" as a form of gambling because certain people took part in it, but they made no protest against big gambling. There was very little harm in granting permits for the "Golden Casket" or for "Liberty Fairs." They were a tremendous robbery, but the proceeds of the robbery went to a good object; that was the difference between those and other forms of gambling. He did not understand why hon. members opposite had raised no protest against the greatest source of gambling in Queensland—that was the racecourse. It was all very well to talk about stopping gambling in a lane, and preventing people from putting a few shillings on a book. Lotteries to help hospitals did no harm to anyone; somebody

got a prize, but the hospitals got the bulk of the money. See what the racecourse encouraged. There were good bookmakers, indifferent bookmakers, and there was the "snide" bookmaker, the racecourse tout, the "whisperer," who did far more harm to the community than a "Golden Casket." He could not understand the outcry against the Attorney-General granting permits for raffles, which were most innocuous things compared with the gambling in which hon. members opposite indulged. He did not know whether many hon. members attended the picture shows, but in nine-tenths of the pictures which led up to a tragedy, it was not the "Golden Casket," but the stock exchange that was shown as the cause of that tragedy. What greater lottery was there than the Wheat Exchange in Chicago? There was nothing to equal the gambling methods on the stock exchange. Without the element of gambling the stock exchange could not exist. The stock exchange, apart from the gilt-edged securities, was a place where "bulls" and "bears" operated through "whisperers." To condemn one portion of gambling and not the whole was ridiculous. If they were going to condemn the "Golden Casket," they should condemn every form of gambling. They should get away from the present hypocritical way of dealing with the matter. Permits had been issued by the Attorney-General in connection with good objects. In that way many hospitals and other institutions were able to raise funds, which otherwise they would not have been able to obtain. He hoped the Attorney-General would not permit the cancellation of these permits while he allowed the stock exchange and the racecourses, which were the father and mother of the "Golden Casket" to exist. Why cut off the child and leave the parent? His protest was directed against the whole of gambling, and not against a portion of it. The attitude of members of the Opposition illustrated the truth of the couplet about—

"Compounding sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to."

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): He would like to draw the attention of the Attorney-General to the fact that he promised at one time to introduce a Bill to regulate and control racing, but nothing had been done in that direction. Not very long ago a motion had been carried in the House by a very large majority in favour of the abolition of proprietary racing in Queensland, but up to the present no notice whatever had been taken of the motion. There was far too much racing in the city of Brisbane and other large towns. At present it was possible to go to a race meeting every day in the week with the exception of Sunday within a radius of 25 miles of Brisbane. Excessive racing was doing a great deal of injury to Queensland, and, while it would be impossible to prevent gambling in connection with horse racing, it should be controlled. He would not support any proposal to do away with horse racing or betting altogether, but legislation should be introduced to control those things. He would prohibit betting altogether except on racecourses, where he would legalise it. Why not allow it to be carried on a racecourse and prevent it being exercised anywhere else? It was all very well to say that a prominent gentleman in the Upper House owned a lane and must be given a profit from the betting that was carried on there.

If a poor person was concerned in the matter, the police would find a way to deal with him. He had brought up the matter of the betting that was being carried on in a certain lane in the city, and he was told that the Commissioner of Police had no power to deal with it; yet afterwards the police prosecuted men who had been taking part in street betting. When the Liberal Administration were in office, they were told that the police had no power to deal with the matter. The late Commissioner of Police told him that he had no power to deal with the men who carried on betting although he knew what was going on, yet they had discovered since that the police had power to deal with the matter. Why did the Government not introduce a Bill to make it illegal to carry on betting in any other place than a racecourse, the same as it was in the other States, and get a certain amount of revenue from it? In Victoria they were putting through a Bill with a view to raising taxation on tickets issued by bookmakers. Notwithstanding the present depression, if they went to the race meetings around Brisbane, they would find there was no scarcity of money there. Parliament taxed the totalisator receipts to the extent of 13½ per cent., and it would be much better if some of the taxation were placed on the bookmakers, or else abolish them altogether. They had abolished the bookmaker in New Zealand and in some of the other States, and racing was carried on more satisfactorily. There was less temptation to "pull" horses. They were told by certain sporting writers that racing was carried out for the purpose of improving the breed of horses, and to provide remounts for defence purposes, but that was not so. Racing to-day was a huge gamble. It did not matter whether a horse was the biggest cripple provided he was fast enough to win a race. If the Queensland Turf Club were compelled to do away with the light weights horses were carrying now and to breed a certain class of horses which would be useful from a remount point of view, racing would be beneficial as well as providing a certain amount of gambling excitement for those who wanted it. The time had come when the Government should take the matter in hand. He could understand that there was a great deal of influence brought to bear upon them to allow the existing state of affairs to continue. A Government with a narrow majority were not likely to do anything that might lose them the support they might be getting from that particular source. Wherever they went, the people were crying out about the amount of racing that was taking place around Brisbane and the damage that was being done. He would not be in favour of doing away with it altogether, but it could be controlled in such a way as to make racing much cleaner and more beneficial from the point of view of breeding a useful horse fit for remount duty in time of war.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why suggest war in these things? We want peace, not war.

Mr. MORGAN: The time would come when a good type of horse would play a very important part in the defence of the country. While other countries were breeding horses of a satisfactory quality, they must do it in Queensland. At present the breeding of good, useful horses was not being encouraged, and no good was being achieved by the enormous amount of money which yearly was being spent in connection with

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racing. No person could honestly state that at present racing was doing any good for Queensland. They allowed one man who owned a certain number of racecourses to take from Queensland £50,000 a year. That money was not spent here. If the Queensland Turf Club made profits, they put them into improvements and increased the prize money. This other individual came here and obtained control in a certain direction. He should not have been allowed to obtain control. If he were bought out, it would be a good thing for Queensland. He (Mr. Morgan) would not advocate the confiscation of his property. There was a way in which the courses that individual possessed could be controlled by a club, and eventually the money which he paid for the ground could be repaid to him and he would be done away with so far as Queensland was concerned. He was not a gentleman who was desirable. He came here only for the money there was in the game, and he was taking away that money and using it in other States. Had it not been for his example, they would not have had the growth that had sprung up of recent years. These latter people recognised there was a great deal of money in it, and now races were being conducted every day of the week. Every member on the Government side recognised that something ought to be done. Any Government who were afraid of taking action because of the political consequences that might ensue were not fit to occupy the Treasury benches. He hoped the Minister would introduce the bill he suggested for the control of racing. The Queensland Turf Club had failed miserably in their control. Horse racing under its control was nothing but a huge gambling institution, and it did nothing towards improving the breed of horses.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): The leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Albert, and the hon. member for Logan brought up the question of increased fees in the Real Property office. Those increases had become necessary because of the increased salaries and the increased cost of paper and other essentials in the office. As a result of the enormous increase in the cost of certain things, some work was being done for a charge of 5s. which cost the office £20.

Mr. BRENNAN: There is no increase in the schedule.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Regarding justification for the increase, they had a precedent in the fact that in 1885, 1905, and 1913 increases on the same lines as had been made recently were made by previous Administrations.

The leader of the Opposition also mentioned the question of bailiffs' fees. Adequate provision, it was hoped, would be made in the Magistrates Courts Bill, to see that those gentlemen received reasonable remuneration.

The hon. member for Logan had brought up the question of the travelling expenses of the judges. The amount on the estimates this year was slightly in excess of the amount voted last year, and was based on last year's expenditure. The hon. gentleman would remember that the Premier had given a promise that no alteration would take place in the position of the judges until the end of next March. Although it was possible the expenses would be on the same scale for at least nine months, even if more money was appropriated it would not be spent if there were not good reasons for doing so.

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The hon. member for Townsville had raised the question of cyclone insurance. He (Mr. Mullan) had gone to a great deal of trouble in connection with cyclone insurance. He had had several consultations with the late Insurance Commissioner, Mr. Goodwyn, who also had gone to considerable trouble to prepare a scheme. After that scheme had been prepared he (Mr. Mullan) met at Townsville an influential deputation to whom he disclosed the Commissioner's scheme. Rightly or wrongly, those gentlemen did not approve of the scheme in some important particulars. He was in the difficult position that on the one hand he had the Commissioner standing adamant for his scheme, and on the other hand the people of Townsville demanding a modified scheme. The result was that at that time nothing was done. He was prepared to go into the matter again with the present Commissioner and see if a practicable scheme could be evolved. If it could, it would be a step in the right direction.

The hon. member for Toowoong, in common with nearly every member who had spoken, had brought up the question of gambling and the permits granted to itinerant showmen. He assured hon. gentlemen that no permits were being issued to itinerant showmen, and it was not the intention of the Government to issue such permits. They were exercising the greatest possible vigilance in connection with the granting of permits for art unions, etc. They recognised that art unions and raffles did a great deal of good to people and institutions in needy circumstances, and it was only in those cases that they were granting permits at present. The Home Department had been requested to advise the police throughout the State that gambling which hitherto had been carried on in connection with carnivals would in future not be permitted. He had from the Commissioner of Police an acknowledgment that he was taking that action. The Government were doing everything possible to prevent illicit gambling, and were permitting only that which was allowed by law.

The hon. member for Albert also mentioned the question of the full amount of stamp duty now being charged when an agreement was made, although the sale might be on terms and the whole of the money not paid. The reason for that was, that under the Stamp Act Amendment Act of 1918, it was provided that, when the agreement was made, although it might be on terms, it was to be treated as the conveyance, and the full amount of stamp duty had to be paid.

Question put and passed.

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
"That £2,250 be granted for 'Court of Industrial Arbitration.'"

Question put and passed.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
"That £55,862 be granted for 'Courts of Petty Sessions.'"

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 the 14th instant, I shall 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 a later hour of the sitting.

QUESTIONS.

HOLDINGS IN EXCESS OF 640 ACRES WITHIN TEN MILES OF EXISTING RAILWAYS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Will he furnish a return showing the number of holdings, leasehold or freehold, in excess of 3,000 acres in area held within 10 miles on either side of our present lines of railway, within a rainfall of between 20 and 24 inches, 24 and 30 inches, and exceeding 30 inches, separately; also the conditions of the leasehold tenures as to rents and duration of leases?

"2. The same particulars in regard to holdings of between 640 and 3,000 acres?

"3. On what lines of railway are such holdings situated; and how many of them are pear-infested?

"4. If so, when can this return be made available for members?"

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) replied—

"1 to 4. The information could not be obtained with the means at the department's disposal in less than six months. For instance, when once the original deed of grant of land is issued, the Lands Department has no knowledge of further dealings with it, all such subsequent dealings being registered in the Real Property Office. To ascertain whether the freehold lands are now held by the original grantees in the areas as described in the original deeds of grant, or whether subdivisions have been effected and transfers registered, would require an exhaustive and costly search in the Titles Office. To compile and tabulate the information when obtained would be such a costly undertaking that the expense necessary to be incurred could not be justified, nor is it considered that any good purpose would be served."

EXPENDITURE ON ENGINE SHEDS, WILLOWBURN.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. Is he yet able to appease my thirst as mentioned in answer to my question of 23rd September—namely, re 'Engine Sheds, Willowburn, Toowoomba'?

"2. Is there any prospect, in view of the large number of unemployed in the Toowoomba district, of an early resumption of work at that centre?"

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

"1. Amount spent to date, £44,607. The hon. member for Toowoomba has made frequent representation on this matter.

"2. I regret there is no prospect of an early resumption of work."

COMMONWEALTH COST OF LIVING STATISTICS.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*) asked the Premier—

"1. Has he noticed that the Commonwealth Statistician's latest figures, published in this morning's 'Brisbane

Courier' on the cost of living (food and groceries), show for September, as compared with August, 1921—

Tasmania ...	3.7 per cent. decrease
South Australia ...	3.6 per cent. decrease
Victoria ...	3.5 per cent. decrease
Western Australia ...	2.6 per cent. decrease
New South Wales ...	1.6 per cent. decrease
Queensland ...	0.1 per cent. increase
And for September, 1921, as compared with 1920—	
Victoria ...	23.4 per cent. decrease
New South Wales ...	22.6 per cent. decrease
Tasmania ...	20.4 per cent. decrease
Queensland ...	16.5 per cent. decrease
Western Australia ...	12.4 per cent. decrease?

"2. Has he noticed the latest percentages of unemployment in the various States as supplied by 'Knibbs'—

Queensland ...	15.5 per cent.
New South Wales ...	13.7 per cent.
Western Australia ...	8.9 per cent.
Victoria ...	8.7 per cent.
South Australia ...	7.9 per cent.
Tasmania ...	4.8 per cent.?

"3. In view of the foregoing official percentages, is he not forced to the conclusion that his Government have made matters worse instead of better in the very avenues they most desired and set out to improve?"

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

"1. The figures quoted by the hon. member are misleading, and, taken by themselves, give an unfair comparison of the cost of living conditions in the various States. The small percentage increase shown against Queensland for September last, as compared with August, 1921, is due to the fact that during the past few weeks the farmers in Queensland have received higher prices for butter, cheese, and milk than have been received by farmers in the other States. To show that the figures quoted by the hon. member are misleading, it will be sufficient to compare the figures for September, 1921, with those for September, 1920. These figures show, according to 'Knibbs,' that the average increase for the month of September, 1920, for all the States, as compared with September, 1919, was 33.2 per cent., while the increase in Queensland was only 19.5 per cent. The net result for the two years is as follows:—

	September 1920 Increase.	September, 1921 Decrease	Net Increase.
Victoria ...	43.3	23.4	19.9
Tasmania ...	31.3	20.4	13.9
South Australia ...	33	22.3	10.7
New South Wales ...	32.8	22.6	10.2
Queensland ...	19.5	16.5	3

thus showing that for the period referred to the net increase in the cost of living was lower in Queensland than in any other State. Queensland certainly shows the lowest percentage decrease for September, 1921, but this result is brought

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about because this State showed the lowest percentage increase in September, 1920, which month is taken for purposes of comparison.

"2. The unemployment figures quoted by the hon. member are also misleading. It is pointed out by 'Knibbs,' at page 1065 of volume No. 13, that—

Any deductions which can be drawn from the data collected as to the relative degree of unemployment in the several States are subject to certain qualifications (in addition to those already stated on page 1061), inasmuch as the industries included in the trade union returns are not uniform for each State. In comparing the results for the individual States, it must therefore be borne in mind that, to some extent at least, comparisons are being drawn between different industries, and not only between different States.

For these reasons, and the other reasons given on page 1061 of 'Knibbs,' I think that no true comparison can be made between the different States in the matter of unemployment figures.

"3. No."

INCREASE OF FEES PAYABLE UNDER REAL PROPERTY ACTS.

Mr. KING (*Logan*) asked the Attorney-General—

"Under what authority, statutory or otherwise, have the fees payable under the Real Property Acts of 1861 and 1877 been increased or amended?"

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

"Under the authority of the Real Property Acts of 1861 to 1877."

RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT FOR DISPOSAL OF QUEENSLAND SUGAR CROP.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"Has anything recently transpired in connection with the asked-for renewal of our agreement with the Commonwealth for the disposal of the Queensland sugar crop?"

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*) replied—

"The Premier some time ago took up with the Commonwealth Government, urging the necessity of an early renewal of the Sugar Purchase Agreement. As the hon. member is no doubt aware, this Government has at all times been active in the sugar producers' interests, and no stone will be left unturned to promote the welfare of this important industry."

ANALYSES OF SOILS, BEERBURRUM AND COOMINYA SOLDIER SETTLEMENTS.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*) asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"1. Will he give the analyses of the Beerburrum and Coominya soils, which he stated on Friday last were good?"

"2. Will he state how many men have left the Beerburrum settlement?"

[*Hon. E. G. Theodore.*

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS replied—

"1. Particulars regarding the quality of the soils on the Beerburrum and Coominya settlements can be perused by the hon. member at the Department of Public Lands.

"2. At the present time there are 31 blocks on the Beerburrum settlement which have either been forfeited or surrendered, 20 of which are now open for reselection. The reason invariably given by settlers for the surrender of blocks is on account of ill-health; forfeiture in the other cases being decided upon on account of the settler's neglect to cultivate his block."

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURE, RAILWAY REFRESHMENT ROOMS.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the total rental received for the railway refreshment-rooms for the year preceding their being taken over as a State enterprise?"

"2. Whilst being carried on under contract did any financial obligation rest upon the Government?"

"3. At the present time are the State enterprises charged with any percentage of office expenses, general, railway expenses; or rental, equivalent to interest charge on cost of rooms?"

"4. If so, what percentage?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"1. £13,382.

"2. No.

"3 and 4. The charges for rent are more profitable to the Railway Department than when the rooms were leased to private persons, the amount received last year being £16,567. In the last four and a-half years the Railway Department has received £68,514 in rents."

WYNNUM STATE FISH DEPOT.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

"1. Are the Government still controlling the business of the fisheries at the Wynnum depot?"

"2. If so, how many hands are employed in the depot?"

"3. What are the total weekly wages paid?"

"4. What is the net return per week from the depot—(a) from the sale of fish, (b) from the sale of ice?"

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

"1. Yes.

"2 and 3. One engine-driver at £5 8s. per week, and a temporary man overhauling at £4 14s. per week.

"4. The information will be obtained."

TRAVELLING EXPENSES OF MINISTERS.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), without notice, asked the Premier—

"When will the information be available in respect of the travelling expenses of Ministers, in accordance with the motion that was carried by the House some weeks ago?"

The PREMIER replied—

“I cannot say positively when it will be available, but the information is being compiled, and I hope to have it tabled before the session closes.”

ORCHARD TAX BILL.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

“Is it his intention to bring in an Orchard Tax Bill this session?”

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE replied—

“No.”

INFANT LIFE PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

THIRD READING.

The HOME SECRETARY (Hon. W. McCormack, *Cairns*): 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—THIRTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE.

COURTS OF PETTY SESSIONS.

Question stated—That £55,862 be granted for “Courts of Petty Sessions”—

Mr. KING (*Logan*): He wanted to ask the Government to give more sympathetic consideration to the police magistrates. Under the new legislation which had been passed, and other legislation which was before them, and which he supposed would be passed, dealing with magistrates courts, very much greater responsibilities would be cast upon magistrates in more ways than one. They would have jurisdiction over claims of greater amount than hitherto, and they would also have to assume responsibility which in the past had been discharged by a jury, at any rate, so far as the District Courts were concerned. In such cases they would have to act as judges and juries, and their responsibilities were increased even to a greater extent than those of the District Court judges, who were, in future, to receive salaries of £2,000 a year. The chief police magistrate in Brisbane was to get £650, including a small increase of £40, the second police magistrate £625, and the third police magistrate £555, whilst the relieving police magistrate would get £455, and others throughout the State were receiving salaries in the vicinity of £450. Those men were not adequately paid. The magistrates should receive greater consideration because of the great responsibilities cast upon them. When they saw the number of cases that came before the magistrates, they got some idea of the nature of the work that the magistrates had to carry out. On page 5, under heading of “Criminal Statistics,” they found that the number of persons taken into custody during the twelve months was 21,086, while 1,302 persons appeared on police summons, making a total of 22,388, representing 20,721

males and 1,667 females. The great majority of them had been tried by police magistrates. The number of cases by arrests and prosecutions by the Criminal Investigation Branch in Brisbane alone was 529, of which 24 went to the Supreme Court. All those cases, as a preliminary, came before a police magistrate.

Mr. BRENNAN: I would try them early in the morning in the cells.

Mr. KING: The hon. member did not believe in an eight-hour day for police magistrates. He knew that police magistrates often worked till 6 o'clock in the evening.

Mr. BRENNAN: Police magistrates are hard worked.

Mr. KING: The police magistrates had too much work to do in Brisbane, and they were going to have very much greater work to do after the passage of the legal Bills now before Parliament. These men were entitled to greater consideration, and he hoped the Government would give that matter consideration, and give to the men who were to carry out such responsible duties the relief they were entitled to. He made a special plea for them, because he knew they were doing good work, and were carrying out responsible work, and were entitled to some consideration.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): He agreed with the hon. member for Logan that the police magistrates were a body of men who had big responsibilities and worked very hard. When they went into the court in Brisbane, they found the police magistrate engaged in trying undefended cases. He thought the Attorney-General should consider the advisability of having an officer outside a police magistrate to deal with those cases. Undefended small debts cases could be decided by a person outside the court. The calling of the defendant's name three times, and there being no appearance, meant waste of time. They had not too many police magistrates in Brisbane. They had in Brisbane first-class clerks of petty sessions, and their next step would be to become police magistrates. He was sure that, when the Magistrates Courts Bill became law, they would have the ability to carry out that work, and that the officers would be compensated in proportion to the responsibility that was cast upon them. He thought that the Bills now before the House would mean an economy of many thousands of pounds every year. On going into the court there were many adjournments. He was not blaming the police magistrate at all: it was simply the system. If a solicitor had too many cases to come before a magistrate, he hoped the Attorney-General would give instructions that that solicitor should hand over the case to someone else. The same thing happened in the Supreme Court. When a barrister got too many cases, the judges had to sit back and wait for his convenience, which was unfair to the litigants. The Attorney-General should bring in a rule providing that the cases must be heard. A solicitor might have two or three cases, and be engaged on one case all day, and he would not be able to take any other case. Witnesses had to be sent away, and there was no end of expense to the public. As a practitioner, he would not mind having a case struck out if he was not present when it was called. If a solicitor or barrister had too many cases, they should be handed over to someone else. Two or three solicitors or barristers monopolised the work,

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causing no end of inconvenience. The Attorney-General would be well advised to grant adjournments only in certain cases. The police magistrates were not to blame; they were trying to accommodate an over-worked profession, consisting of men holding four or five cases, while other men only got an occasional one. He hoped the Attorney-General would interest himself in the matter, and see that the people got a fair deal, and that the profession also was fairly treated.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): The hon. member for Logan had mentioned the remuneration paid to police magistrates. When they compared the salaries of police magistrates with the salaries paid in other States, they compared favourably. In Adelaide they paid a high fee to one man, but the average worked out much below that sum. They had a great many more police magistrates per head of population than any other State. South Australia had only six police magistrates.

Mr. KING: What about the County Court judges?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They were there, too. Western Australia had only seven magistrates, New Zealand only nine, and Victoria eighteen, whereas in Queensland, where they had nothing like the population of Victoria, they had thirty police magistrates and a few relieving magistrates. He admitted that the police magistrates' responsibilities would certainly be increased under the Magistrates Courts Bill, but the increase was not so great as the hon. member seemed to imagine. The whole of the criminal jurisdiction of the District Court would be passed on to the Supreme Court.

Mr. KING: The preliminary work has to go through the police magistrates.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It went through the police magistrates at the present time. There were three District Court judges. One was wholly occupied in Arbitration Court work; half the time of one judge was occupied on Land Court appeals and the Cane Prices Board; and there was really only the time of one and a-half judges, to put it that way, occupied in the District Court on civil and criminal work; and, now that they were taking the criminal jurisdiction from that court, there was only work for one District Court judge. That work was to be divided amongst the thirty police magistrates. The responsibilities of the police magistrates were to be increased because of the higher standard of work. The responsibilities would be increased more in the nature of a raising of the type of work.

Mr. KING: There would be an increase in civil work.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: He admitted that; but there would not be a great amount. There would certainly be an increase of responsibilities because of the more important Acts the police magistrates would have to become acquainted with. He would give full consideration to the contention raised by the hon. member for Logan. The hon. member for Toowoomba had mentioned the question of the congestion of the work in the courts, and suggested that there should be some rearrangement. That matter was under consideration at the present time, and would receive prompt attention.

Question put and passed.

[*Mr. Brennan.*

DISTRICT COURTS.

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

“That £12,021 be granted for ‘District Courts’”—

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): He could see no necessity for that vote now that the District Court was to be abolished. He noticed specially that there was one big item of “Allowances to witnesses and jurors, £6,300,” whereas the vote last year was only £5,500. They had been told that the criminal jurisdiction of that court was being transferred to the Supreme Court, and juries were being done away with, so far as the civil jurisdiction was concerned, so that there was no necessity for that vote. He quite understood that a portion of the year had yet to run.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It would be some time before they could rearrange things. The three Acts would not come into operation until proclaimed, and they could not be proclaimed until they were ready. The Premier has already promised that the Judges' Retirement Act would not come into operation before the end of March next. That would mean that nine months at least would have elapsed, and probably it would be twelve months before they had completed the necessary preliminaries. The Estimates were prepared on a basis of the last year's expenditure, and if the money is not expended it would lapse.

Mr. VOWLES: It was natural to expect that the Government would know what their programme would be when preparing the Estimates; it seemed to him to be out of place to ask Parliament to pass money for something that they were going to wipe out of existence.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): He would like to know what would become of the registrars of the District Court?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They will become registrars of the Supreme Court.

Mr. KING: There already was a registrar in the Supreme Court.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It will be a matter of readjustment later when the Act comes into operation.

Mr. KING: They had a registrar in the District Court and a registrar in the Supreme Court in Brisbane, and he wanted to know what would become of the registrar of the District Court?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Probably we will absorb him in some other sphere.

Question put and passed.

ELECTORAL REGISTRATION.

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

“That there be granted £20,677 for ‘Electoral registration.’”

[5 p.m.]

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): He wished to draw attention to the amount of £17,500 put down for “Contingencies,” including “Expenses of elections,” and to know how much was expended at the last election.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: £33,000 was expended last year in connection with the election. The vote for “Contingencies” includes incidentals and various matters in connection with the work of the department. The Redistribution of Seats Commission comes in under the amount asked for.

Mr. VOWLES: They knew that the redistribution of seats cost 600 guineas—there were three Commissioners at 200 guineas a head. Surely printing and other incidentals did not account for £17,500. The Commissioners had been doing good work of redistribution in their ordinary time. He would like an explanation from the Minister, as he did not care to vote £17,500 for "Contingencies" without knowing how the amount was made up.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: There was nothing unusual about the vote. Last year they had to conduct an election, which cost £33,278.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: You had, also, the prohibition referendum.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Yes, that cost something. Contingent expenses were always going on whether there was an election or not.

Mr. VOWLES: Can you give us the figures with regard to the Redistribution of Seats Commission expenses?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The expenses of the Commission to date were £1,053 4s. 3d., and there might be some additional expenses. The vote was necessary to carry on the department.

Question put and passed.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES.

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

"That £1,876 be granted for 'Friendly Societies.'"

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): He regretted to see that the vote had been reduced, as, whatever their ideas of economy might be, it was one connected with people who were doing very useful work in the State. The work of the registrar and his staff had increased. The membership of the friendly societies was increasing, and consequently more supervision was required. He was sorry that the Government had not seen fit to give some consideration to a resolution which was carried in the House some time ago in regard to the giving of assistance to friendly societies by contribution to the funds on lines similar to those in operation in New South Wales. In regard to compulsory insurance and unemployment benefits, a sympathetic Government could do much for the wage-earners of Queensland. Like the New South Wales Government, the Government might make provision to deal with unemployment, so far as the thrifty portion of the community was concerned, if they controlled the friendly society movement.

Question put and passed.

PARLIAMENTARY DRAFTSMAN.

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

"That £650 be granted for 'Parliamentary Draftsman.'"

Question put and passed.

PUBLIC SERVICE SUPERANNUATION BOARD.

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

"That £1,402 be granted for 'Public Service Superannuation Board.'"

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): He understood that public servants had been induced to con-

tribute to the Public Service Superannuation Fund with the idea of retiring at the age of seventy without taking incapacity units, and on that understanding some of them did not take out incapacity units. Some of those who contributed were being retired now, not because they were incapacitated, but because they had reached sixty-five years of age, and they would have to continue their payments, although they had no salaries, until they reached seventy years of age. It seemed an anomaly to retire them at sixty-five, when they would have to make payments to the fund until they were seventy before they were able to get the superannuation allowance. They had been apparently led to enter the scheme on a distinct understanding that they would not be retired before they reached seventy years of age, and they were now in an unfortunate position. It was difficult for them to get other occupations so as to earn a salary which would enable them to continue their payments to the fund until they reached seventy years of age. It appeared to him that a number of these unfortunate public servants would have to make a compromise and get the cash value for the compensation which would accrue to them at seventy years of age. If those men had been told that there was a likelihood of being retrenched at the age of sixty-five, they would probably have taken out incapacity units. They were placed in an invidious position, and would probably have to sacrifice a great many of the benefits for which they had been subscribing, not through any fault of their own, but merely because the Government had got into a position of financial embarrassment. He thought some assistance should be given to them by the Government, either by continuing their payments until they were seventy, or by arranging that they should get their superannuation allowance when they were compulsorily retired. He thought the Government would recognise that those public servants had been placed in a very unfair position, and he hoped that the Attorney-General would give some information as to what was going to be done to compensate them in the unfortunate circumstances in which they had been placed.

At 5.10 p.m.,

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

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*): In reply to the hon. member, he would point out that section 13, subsection (2) of the Public Service Superannuation Act provided—

"Any such officer, if the exigencies of the public service permit or unless he is incapacitated, shall be continued in employment until he attains the age of seventy years, anything in the Public Service Act of 1896 or any regulations thereunder to the contrary notwithstanding."

That depended on "the exigencies of the public service." With regard to the matter of taking out annuity units maturing at seventy years of age, it was unfortunate for an officer to be retired before that time, but he did not lose anything, because he compromised with the board.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): He did not understand the Minister quite clearly in regard to the matter. There was a distinct

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agreement made with various officers, which he understood read in this way—

“ CLASSES C AND D.

“ MALES 40 AND OVER.

“ If you contribute under tables B, D, F, or H, you will acquire the right to remain in the service until the age of seventy, and your contributions will continue until that age, when your rights to incapacity allowance, if you have contributed for that benefit, will cease, and your annuity will commence, and if you have contributed for assurance, the sum assured will be payable at death, or you may, on retirement, exchange for an additional annuity according to its value.

“ Dated, Public Service Superannuation Board Office, Brisbane, December, 1912.

“(Signed) ROBERT RENDLE,
“ Manager.

“ Public Service Superannuation
Board Office.”

That was a very binding undertaking, and, if it was not to be recognised, or was likely to be broken, the Government of the day would be distinctly chargeable with having broken a sacred agreement entered into with those officers. He knew of instances in which men had contributed in this way, and if the contract was not to be recognised, a very serious charge would lie against the Government. For the good name of the country, and in order to ensure confidence among public servants who might be in the position he had indicated, he hoped that a very clear statement would be forthcoming from the Minister.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): This matter required further explanation. The circular that had been issued by Mr. Rendle showed that these men were encouraged to come under the fund.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They did not lose as a result of having come under it; they compromised and got their money. It was made subject to the age of retirement.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: This was a definite statement made by a responsible officer.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I understand that Mr. Rendle had no statutory authority to send that letter out at that time.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The further the Minister went, the worse he appeared to flounder. Telling them that the officer had not any authority to send out this circular would not give much satisfaction to the public servants concerned. Even though the officer might have made a mistake, seeing contracts had been entered into with various public servants, the Government should stand up to the letter of the agreement. The decision to retire those officers had not been come to without some thought. The least the Minister could do was to intimate to those who were vitally concerned what the intention of the Government was. If the Government had decided that men had to retire, but they were not prepared to offer those men some employment whereby they would be able to continue their contributions until they attained the age of seventy years, the honest thing was to pay those men the amount they would be entitled to at the age of seventy years. The Government would be acting unfairly if they did not do that.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): He would like the Attorney-General to give some infor-

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mation in reference to men who were retired at the age of sixty-five and were entitled to a superannuation annuity at that age if they were found temporary employment at a lesser remuneration. One man had taken out two units of annuity, and was entitled to £110 per annum. That man was drawing a salary of £400 a year, and was retired at the age of sixty-five years. He was offered temporary employment in the same department at £200 a year, but was told that, if he drew that salary he would not be entitled to draw the £110 a year from the Superannuation Fund. Was that correct or not? If it were, he would be getting only £90 a year for his services. That was not a right position to take up.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): He agreed entirely with the opinions expressed by previous speakers. There must be something radically wrong with the present position when members of the public service received a circular which started out with the distinct promise—

“ If you contribute under tables B, D, F, or H, you will acquire the right to remain in the service until the age of seventy.”

The TREASURER: Who sent the circular out?

Mr. KING: It had come from Mr. Rendle, manager of the Superannuation Fund. The circular had gone out in the face of the declared policy of the Government to retire public servants at the age of sixty-five years.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That was in 1912. It was not based on statutory authority.

The TREASURER: If the manager of a bank sent out a circular that each £1 note was worth £2, would it stand?

Mr. KING: That would be absurd on the face of it. A suggestion, promise, or inducement had been held out to those men to come under the fund. They were told that, if they contributed to the fund, they acquired the right to remain in the service until they reached the age of seventy years. The men accepted those terms, and said they would contribute to the fund. Hon. members should always bear in mind that contributors over the age of forty years had to be encouraged to come under the fund. What was the interpretation of the words “ exigencies of the service ”? That might mean anything to the person who received it. It was not a fair thing to the men who had been induced to come in, and their rights should be preserved.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There appeared to be a misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, on the part of the Minister and the officers of the department with regard to the circular. If that were so, they owed a duty to the men and women who were affected by the circular. It was hardly conceivable that a responsible officer of the public service would send out such a circular without having authority to do so. He was surprised at the Treasurer's reference to the matter.

The TREASURER: I want to drive home the point that the registrar sent out the circular without any Ministerial authority, and without any statutory authority.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: You should have withdrawn it.

The TREASURER: Your Government were in power at that time.

Mr. TAYLOR: Evidently the Treasurer had some knowledge of the circular. Where he had gained it he had not told them. If he had gained it a year or two back he should have notified the officers concerned that a mistake had been made, and that the circular had been sent out without any authority from the responsible Minister. He (Mr. Taylor) always had had an objection to putting youngsters into the public service. If he had 100 children, he would keep them 100 miles away from it. From what they had heard during the course of the various debates, it was the last place in which to put a youngster. The matter required to be cleared up. If any injustice had been done, it was not too late to rectify it and to take every precaution that such a misunderstanding did not occur in the future.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In view of the opinions expressed by hon. gentlemen on the question, he would examine the circular and go into the matter. He had never seen or heard of the circular previously, but he now would go into the matter and see what was behind it. He wanted to do justice to everybody.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): He thought the statement of the Minister was satisfactory. They understood that the Government were in ignorance of the matter.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I am not saying that at all. I say I have not seen or heard of the circular.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: If the Committee were given to understand that fair play was to be afforded to these men, the matter could reasonably be dropped. No one should be victimised.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): It was very pleasing to hear the Minister say that he would give the matter some consideration. It seemed that there had been a want of consideration. These men had been retired, and these things should have been considered prior to their retirement.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: We have considered every aspect of the matter. This is a new phase that the hon. gentleman has raised.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Alongside the Attorney-General sat the Treasurer, who seemed to be somewhat hostile a few moments ago. That hon. gentleman seemed to be aware that such a circular was in existence, and had gone so far as to tell the Committee by interjection it had been sent out without the authority of the Government of the day. If the Denham Government—which he (Mr. Roberts) supported—had to a certain extent committed themselves by their officers, he would stand to that. He would like to hear the Premier assure the Committee that justice would be done. It was not a matter of party: it was a matter of doing the right thing by the public service of Queensland. They had taken these men's contributions and had seen fit to retire them, and the least the Government could do was to say they would honour the agreement, particularly as the action had not been taken in their time. He was not blaming the Government in any way. He was asking them to see that these men got the pensions as though they had been retired at the age of seventy years.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The mere fact of the Attorney-General saying he would give consideration to a thing like this was hardly sufficient.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not expect me to commit myself before examining the matter.

Mr. MOORE: He did expect the Attorney-General to commit himself to giving justice to the public servants.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said I would do that.

Mr. MOORE: If these men had known there was a chance of their being retired before they reached the age of seventy years, they would have taken out incapacity units and would not have allowed themselves to be placed in this unfortunate position. Because the financial position compelled the Government to retire men at the age of sixty-five years, he did not see why these unfortunate public servants should have to compound with the Superannuation Board and accept a compromise. There was no reason for that. They came in on the understanding they would remain in the service until they were seventy years of age except they were incapacitated.

The PREMIER: The Attorney-General said he would look at the circular. I have not seen that circular.

At 5.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. MOORE: It seemed a most unfair thing that they should have contributed to the fund to the extent they had and then have to make a compromise because they were forced out of the service. They had to wait for five years before they could get their pensions, and they must pay contributions all the time.

The PREMIER: They get their annuity or incapacity immediately they retire. The Superannuation Fund pays it, and the Government reimburse the fund. Anything that they have paid for their one or two units of incapacity allowance was repaid so soon as they retired.

Mr. MOORE: He admitted that if they had taken out incapacity units, but they joined the fund on an understanding that they would not be retired until they were seventy, and now they had to continue contributing till they were seventy.

The PREMIER: It is not just now that the first retirements have been taking place.

Mr. MOORE: It was not a reasonable excuse to say that an officer sent out the circular without authority. The Government could not get out of it by saying that they did not know that their servant was doing it. They must shoulder the responsibility of their officers.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): A distinct assurance from the Minister would meet every objection, but, without reflecting on the Minister, he wanted to ask if it was a distinct assurance on the hon. gentleman's part when he said that he would look into the matter?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not want me to commit myself to a thing that I have not considered?

HON. W. H. BARNES: He wanted the Minister to commit himself to the extent of saying that, if that circular went out from a Government office, whether under the present Government or any other Government, to individual employees, the Government would stand up to their contract. There had been other cases where contracts had been broken by the Government, and were the

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Government going to brush this contract quietly on one side because the persons concerned happened to be weak men without a strong voice? There was another phase of the question which had to be considered—that once they established a rule that the Government at their own sweet will could do anything which was wrong, they established a bad precedent for the days to come. They did not know that it might not hit somebody whom they least expected it to hit. Queensland had already got a bad name in another direction, and they should take care not to give her a bad name in respect of her treatment of the employees of the State.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): He did not care to allow the vote to go without recording his protest against what had apparently been done. It seemed to him that a certain body of public servants were suffering an injustice which it was the duty of the Government to remove so soon as possible. The Premier fell back on the fact that other public servants had been superannuated at the age of sixty-five, but this matter had now come to light and they must realise that the men had been paying premiums on the understanding outlined in the circular, and upon that consideration had deprived themselves of all the benefits they might have had by protecting themselves in case of incapacity. The contract was very definite, for the circular read—

‘CLASSES C AND D.

“MALES 40 AND OVER.

“If you contribute under tables B, D, F, or H, you will acquire the right to remain in the service until the age of seventy, and your contributions will continue until that age when your rights to incapacity allowance, if you have contributed for that benefit, will cease, and your annuity will commence, and if you have contributed for assurance, the sum assured will be payable at death, or you may, on retirement, exchange for an additional annuity according to its value.

“Dated, Public Service Superannuation Board Office, Brisbane, December, 1912.

“(Signed) ROBERT RENDLE,
“Manager.

“Public Service Superannuation
Board Office.”

That was an inducement for them to come under the scheme. At any rate, if there was a misunderstanding they should not be the sufferers when they were dealing with the Government. If they were to have no retiring allowance, they should even be taken back into the service and continue on their salaries until they were seventy years of age, or, failing that, receive the retiring allowance to which they would have been entitled had they continued in office till the age for retiring was reached.

THE PREMIER: The only thing I am sorry for is that the matter was not discussed on the Public Service Commissioner's vote, under my department, when I would have had the information here.

Mr. VOWLES: He was ignorant of it before, or he would have voiced the matter long ago. He asked the Government to deal with the matter as employers should treat their employees—generously. There was a rule that every person of the age of sixty-five was to be retired, and the question of a man's

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capabilities did not come into consideration, and the Government should deal with the matter fairly.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I can assure you that we will deal with the matter justly.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): The circular was a matter of common knowledge. When Colonel Moore and Mr. Morris and Mr. Eglington, and other police magistrates, were retired some years ago the question came up, whilst within the last ten days the East Moreton Teachers' Association discussed the matter in Brisbane, when it was shown that the circular had induced teachers and others to come under the Superannuation Fund. It was astonishing that the matter had not come under the notice of the Attorney-General, although, of course, he accepted the hon. gentleman's assurance without reservation that it had not, but he hoped that he would now see that justice was done.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): It was extraordinary that the Attorney-General had not gone into the matter before the Estimates came before the House, inasmuch as about half a column had recently appeared in the daily papers in regard to it. He failed to realise why the Minister would not do the right thing, unless there was some idea of getting round the contract contained in the circular. There was an offer, and there was an acceptance by the payment of the premiums. There was also consideration in the contract, and there was no doubt that, if it were taken to law, the Government would lose the case, and the repudiation of which they the Opposition have been talking for months would be proved again. There would be no further talk from the Opposition if the Attorney-General would do the right thing and say that the men would be reinstated. They were promised by the circular that, if they paid certain contributions, they would be retained until they were seventy years of age, but now both male and female contributors had had their services dispensed with at sixty-five years, notwithstanding that from 1912 they had done their part by paying their contributions. He did not think for a moment that one could put the contract in clearer and more concise language than the circular. There was no equivocation. The Government had overstepped the mark, and it was not sufficient to tell the Committee that consideration would be given to the position. Now, when the Estimates were being considered, was the time when the Minister should tell the Committee that he would rectify the wrong by recognising the contract and undertaking that the Government would carry out their agreement.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): The “*Courier*” of the 17th instant, page 6, contained the following report of the discussion of the matter by the East Moreton Teachers' Association:—

“MORE REPUDIATION.

“TEACHERS AND RETRENCHMENT.

“That the East Moreton Teachers' Association enters its strong protest against the compulsory retirement of so many senior teachers of the State on the grounds of being over sixty-five years of age.’ This motion was carried unanimously at the annual meeting of the East Moreton Teachers' Association on Saturday. It was further decided to send a copy of the resolution to the members

of Parliament for East Moreton constituencies, together with a statement of the position as regards retirement.

"In moving the motion, Mr. J. J. Dempsey said he was convinced that not 30 per cent. of the members of Parliament understood the position. They believed it was being done on the grounds of economy and of inefficiency owing to age. They were ignorant of the fact that when the age limit was introduced provision was made for a retiring allowance, which provision was subsequently wiped out and the age limit retained. They, too, were ignorant of the fact that the men were promised, in a printed circular from the Superannuation Board, that by contributing to the Superannuation Fund under a certain table they would be acquiring the right to remain in the service until they reached the age of seventy years. The teachers had entered into these payments on this understanding. Now this was being treated as another 'scrap of paper,' to be regarded or disregarded as the Government thought fit. The legal advisers of the union had informed it that by something which was done in 1917 it was doubtful if they had a legal right to what they believed to be their rights, but they certainly had a moral right to them."

The matter had received the earnest consideration of the teachers, and hon. members recognised that the case was identical with the way in which it had been presented that afternoon. The House and the country should know that the position of these men were not going to be jeopardised, and that not only would their case receive, as indicated by the Minister a short time ago, consideration, but that justice would be done. If the Attorney-General would assure the Committee that justice would be done and that the honourable agreement that was arrived at between the Government of the day and the public servants concerned, then the matter could end. He took it that the Government would certainly honour the agreement, and that no injustice at any time or to any extent would be done to the officers concerned.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): What the hon. member for Warwick had read should be satisfactory evidence so far as the rights of the teachers were concerned. In the report they were told that legal advice had been obtained in 1917, and the advice was that it was doubtful if the public servants affected had a legal claim; but the Government should be an example to other employers in the State so far as their employees were concerned. Where a private employer might endeavour to take advantage of some legal technicality which might relieve him of certain liabilities, he did not think that was justification for the Government adopting any such rule of conduct in connection with their employees. It had been stated that a circular had gone out unknown to the Attorney-General, but the Treasurer appeared to know something about it.

Mr. GLEDSON: He said it went out without statutory authority.

Mr. TAYLOR: If a mistake had been made, if it was only one month or six months, or if it was one year, or two years ago, the rectification of that mistake devolved upon the Attorney-General. That did not

appear to have been done. If it had not been for the financial strain existing at the present time, the matter probably would not have cropped up just now. But it had cropped up, and the Government had only one duty to perform, and that was to do the right thing by the men who had been retrenched on account of their having reached the age of sixty-five. They should extend to these men the right and justice that they were claiming from the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): The Government's duty in this case was not only to see that justice was done, but to honour their obligations. There might be no legal claim upon the Government, yet a moral claim was there, and in his opinion that should be just as binding as a legal claim. The officer in charge of the superannuation board was a man in high authority, and the Minister could not possibly repudiate what had been done in good faith and which the officers of the public service had accepted in good faith. The Attorney-General might say he was going to mete out justice, but it might be like some of the justice meted out to the judges of the Supreme Court, which the Opposition held to be dishonourable, and unworthy of the Government. In this case it would be infinitely worse, because they were dealing with men who did not have so much at their back in their old age as possibly the judges had. These gentlemen had possibly spent their lives in the service of the country, and had contributed to the fund in good faith, and in the expectation that when they reached old age they would receive some benefit. The Government retired them at sixty-five years of age, and they now found they were not to receive any benefit. The Attorney-General should say what he was going to do. He should tell the Committee if he was going to honour the obligation. As hon. members on his side had one conception of justice and hon. members on the other side had another conception of justice, the Attorney-General should say whether the Government intended to honour the obligation embodied in the circular sent out by the head of the department. They could see from the tone of the letter written to the Press the other day how the people concerned regarded the matter. The writer of the letter obtained legal advice in 1917, and his legal advisers had told him that he had no legal right, but that most certainly there was a moral right and obligation. Such occurrences as these were undermining the whole of the public service. Men engaged in the service expected that they were going to be treated in the most fair, liberal, and honest way for their services; and, if they found that promises and pledges were not kept, it was hard to say what might result. He hoped the Attorney-General would keep his promise, and that the matter would be satisfactorily dealt with. He hoped the Attorney-General would state unequivocally that the obligations implied by the circular would be honoured to the letter.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): There were aspects of the matter which should not be lightly passed over by the Committee. He noticed that the Premier had been looking up certain matters.

The PREMIER: I have looked up Mr. Macartney's speech. He raised the question very fully in 1916, when he was leader of the Opposition, but he never referred to any alleged circular.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: Did the hon. gentleman suggest that the teachers assembled in conference had manufactured the circular?

The PREMIER: He was not suggesting that; but it had not been brought under his notice.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was glad to know that. The retrenchment had not taken place until recently.

The PREMIER: Similar retrenchment took place in 1916.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That was no argument. If a repudiation of contract entered into with the employees of the State took place in 1916, it would still be wrong. The very fact of the circular not having been mentioned previously was no argument. He accepted in full the statement made by the Attorney-General that he would look seriously into the matter, but they wanted something more than that. It might be that, when the Minister got away from the House he was not going to take any action. The men affected have the right to receive a distinct assurance. It seemed to him that the Government were probably going to strike at the question of superannuation where there was no definite agreement, and other people later on might find themselves in exactly the same position. It was not nice to mention names in Committee, but the head teacher of the State school at Coorparoo, who has been retired, regarded it as a distinct breach of contract. He had been employed by the department for many years and had looked forward, because of his contract, to work being found for him for a certain period, and yet that arrangement or contract was broken. He would emphasise that the Government had not been proverbial for keeping their contracts, and they were creating suspicion in the minds of hon. members. The Government had not been proverbial for standing up to their contracts, and scraps of paper had not been worth very much to the Government when it suited their own convenience. Here they had a representative gathering of teachers, who decided to send a resume of the case to the members for the various electorates. Were the Government out, not only to get at what they call the top fellow, but to penalise the working man in this particular connection? After all, teachers were only drawing very modest salaries.

Mr. PEASE: In your time they were.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member was again chirping, although he did not know anything about the matter.

Mr. PEASE: I know more than you do about it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He would ask the Attorney-General if it was the intention of the Government to get at the worker or anyone else employed in the public service, if they thought it would suit their financial needs at a time of very great crisis? The Government had had serious financial needs. They had been very hard up, and this looked like one of the methods that they were adopting to see if they could remedy the existing state of affairs. The Minister had been consulting with the officers of the department again and again.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is an awful crime.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was not a crime at all. It indicated that the Minister was desirous of getting light on the subject.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I want to familiarise myself with the matter.

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HON. W. H. BARNES: He thought the Minister should do that. The Treasurer on the one hand had stated that there was no statutory authority for sending out the circular, and the Attorney-General had professed to know something about it. It struck him as being strange that it had not been brought under the notice of the Attorney-General in 1916. Possibly the Minister had been looking up the matter during the dinner hour and might now be able to place the Committee in full possession of the facts.

[7 p.m.]

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I give the hon. member the same assurance that I gave him before tea.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It seemed that they were only going to get as far as an expression of sympathy to-night.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I said more than that. I said that I was going to inquire into the matter.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Minister had given no promise that, when he made inquiry and found that these men had been unjustly treated, he was going to put things right. What was the use of sending a letter saying that the Government had inquired into the matter, but that that was as far as they could go? He noticed that the teachers themselves proposed to show their sympathy with these men, but sympathy without relief was not very much good. He hoped that the Committee would in some marked way show that not only did they realise what the teachers felt, but that they would show their disapprobation of the Government.

The TREASURER: You do not argue that all teachers should be kept on till they are seventy?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Treasurer was very good at sidetracking matters. When a contract had been made with men it should not be broken by the Government. At page 366 of "Hansard" last year, the hon. member for Logan asked the following question—

"How many teachers over the age of sixty-five years, who are contributing to the Superannuation Fund, have recently received notice from the department dispensing with their services?"

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

One teacher, who is over the age of sixty-five years, and who is a contributor to the Superannuation Fund, has, in terms of section 49 of the Public Service Act of 1936, been retired from the Public Service as from the 31st December, 1920."

He trusted that the Committee would in some marked way show its disapproval of the action of the Government.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): He would like to express his disapproval of anything that savoured of repudiation, particularly when it affected the public servants of the State. After hearing the explanation given that afternoon, there was no doubt that a distinct understanding was given to the officers of the Education and other departments concerned that, if they came under the Public Service Superannuation Act, their positions would be secure until they were seventy years of age. The Government

should therefore honour the agreement. It would not be to their credit if they broke an agreement made by one of the principal officers of the department with public servants. The public servants who would be promoted if these retirements were made were most emphatically objecting to it, realising that a great injustice was being done. The Committee should not agree to a breach of contract with the public servants.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): The Minister should make some definite announcement as to what his intentions were regarding these retrenched teachers. A contract had been entered into with them. It would be as well to read the part of the report of the Teachers' Association contained in the "Courier" of 17th instant, which had not been quoted by the hon. member for Bulimba—

"The association's annual report, which was adopted, stated that it was satisfactory to know that the 'mark' system evolved by the association had met with a favourable reception at the hands of the Executive. The membership had increased from 622 to 673. The report added, 'We are sorry that the exigencies of the public service are such as to cause retrenchment to be so rife. Our branch of the service has been hit hard, privileges enjoyed almost since the passing of the Education Act have been lopped off, and many of our finest exponents of the teaching art, in full possession of their faculties, have had summary notice of their retirement. The loss partakes more of a national character than a purely association one, but is serious from any aspect.'"

That should cause the Attorney-General to make a definite announcement to the Committee as to whether it was intended that proper treatment should be given to these men.

The TREASURER: Has not the Minister given you an assurance? He can make a statement when the resolutions are brought up.

Mr. PETRIE: He was quite satisfied that the Attorney-General was sincere in the assurance he had given, but that was not sufficient. The Opposition would be more satisfied if the Minister would make a definite statement now. To test the feeling of the House, he moved—

"That the vote be reduced by £1."

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): He hoped the hon. member would not insist on his amendment, as the Minister had given an assurance that the matter would be carefully inquired into. The question was a most difficult one, the trouble being caused by the conflict between two statutes passed by the late Government—the Public Service Superannuation Act and the Public Service Act. Mr. Macartney, who was then the Secretary for Public Lands, introduced the Public Service Bill—he was not sure who introduced the Public Service Superannuation Bill—but the two measures conflicted, in so far as the Public Service Act laid down the retiring age at sixty-five, while the Public Service Superannuation Act allowed certain contributors to retire at the age of seventy. When he (Mr. Fihelly) was in the Department of Justice, the matter arose through some correspondence between Mr. Story, now Public Service Commissioner, and Mr. Rendle, the manager of the

Public Service Superannuation Fund. Difficulties arose not merely with teachers, but with other officers who were retired in accordance with the Public Service Act, in connection with the obligations of the Government under the Public Service Superannuation Act. He did not think that hon. members opposite would suggest that all teachers should be kept on until the age of seventy. Parliament should, perhaps, have made more generous provision in the Superannuation Act, so that teachers could retire at sixty-five. Their duties were responsible and important. If any function required activity and energy and the full possession of one's faculties, it was the office of a teacher. The hon. member for Toombul would be well advised to withdraw his amendment, and leave it to the Minister to reply on the resolutions from the Chamber. The matter would have the most sympathetic consideration of the Cabinet, who did not want to do any injustice to the public service, and, if there was an error in legislation—if, through some anomaly, the two Acts conflicted and hardship was done—he thought the Government would be only too happy to find some means by which to remedy it. It was most important for the efficiency of the Department of Public Instruction that men who were too old should not be in charge of important schools; that was of great concern to their young people. The Government did not want to inflict hardship on any public servants, and had treated them very well. They had shown that by the establishment of the Arbitration Court, and by the generous classification they had recently given, which placed the public servants on a firm and secure basis. The bona fides of the Government could not be questioned, and, in view of the assurance given by the Attorney-General, he thought the amendment ought to be withdrawn.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): It was somewhat pleasing to hear the remarks of the Treasurer. The difficulty was that he did not carry it into effect. That was not a new question. The Government have had four years, since the matter was first raised, to consider their position and deal fairly with the public service; but they had not seen fit to do it. Yet the Treasurer graciously came along and suggested that they should wait a few days to enable the Attorney-General to give the matter consideration. The only way in which they could deal with it was the way proposed by the hon. member for Toombul. They would then see whether hon. members opposite would stand up to their obligations. In 1916 Mr. Macartney, the late member for Toowoong, had gone very fully into the rights of the public service under the superannuation scheme. That hon. gentleman was not satisfied with putting forward his own opinions, but he introduced a statement made by the then Secretary for Public Instruction (Mr. Hardacre) when the Bill was going through the House in 1912. Mr. Macartney was in charge of the Bill in 1912, and knew what was the intention of the Government, and he brought forward the evidence of the draftsman at the time to show it was intended, if these men contributed to the fund, to continue them in the service until they reached the age of seventy years. He would quote from the remarks of the Secretary for Public Instruction (Mr. Hardacre), as member for Leichhardt—"Hansard," vol. cxxiii., page 1015—

"One of the biggest difficulties we are

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confronted with it how to provide for those who are nearing the end of their lives in the service, and who have been looking forward with some fear and trembling to the time when they have to leave the service. One of the biggest difficulties has been to provide for them in some way without making the premium altogether too high, and, on the other hand, without burdening the general scheme. It seems to me the proposal in the Bill has, by a very ingenious contrivance, met that difficulty. It provides a special scheme, at the age of forty, to be entered into voluntarily, and in order to save burdening the general scheme they have made special provisions, saying, 'If you go into this special schedule we will permit you to remain an additional five years in the service,' which will be much more satisfactory to them than even giving them a fairly large annuity, and at the same time making them retire."

THE TREASURER: Why did he not straight out amend the Public Service Act, and bring it into conformity with the Public Service Superannuation Act?

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: Those were the remarks of an hon. member who was now in the Cabinet. When the Treasurer asked for another chance to review the position, he (Mr. Roberts) wanted to know how many public servants were going to be thrown out on the streets without regard to the agreements the Government had entered into with them? What satisfaction was it to those men who had left the service, and lost what they were entitled to, for the Government to say that they were looking after the interests of the public service, and then to tell them that they wanted a few more days to consider the matter. No one knew better than the Treasurer that the Government owed an obligation to those public servants, and they were shirking it.

MR. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): It was amusing to hear the advocacy of the claims of the public service by hon. members who were connected with the Government that stopped the automatic increases, after having made an attempt to reduce salaries to a certain amount.

MR. T. R. ROBERTS: You know that is quite untrue.

MR. BRENNAN: It was true. They now came along and pretended they were the friends of the public service. If they were back in office to-morrow, they would kill the public service. The hon. member for East Toowoomba came along with his voice breaking into tears about the public service. What did that hon. member care? He had no sympathy for the public service. The whole trouble had arisen because of two conflicting Acts, and the present Government were asked to remedy it before they went into recess. Hon. members opposite had had three years in which to remedy it, and they had done nothing. What did the Opposition care about it?

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What do you care?

MR. BRENNAN: The present Government had made available to the public service the Arbitration Court to enable them to get a fair living. It made him smile to hear the speeches and to notice the way in which the

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hon. member for East Toowoomba could attune his voice to tears. If the public servants were going to listen to that sort of nonsense, it was up to the Government to ask them which side they were on, and if they wanted the assistance of hon. members opposite? This trouble had been bequeathed by the recent Government, which hon. members opposite represented. The present Government were not to blame for it.

Question—That the sum of £1,401 only be granted (*Mr. Petrie's amendment*)—put; and the Committee divided:—

AYES, 33.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.	" King
" Barnes, W. H.	" Logan
" Bobbington	" Macgregor
" Bell	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Moore
" Cattermull	" Morgan
" Clayton	" Nott
" Corser	" Petrie
" Costello	" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Deacon	" Roberts, T. R.
" Edwards	" Sizer
" Elphinstone	" Swayne
" Fletcher	" Taylor
" Fry	" Vowles
" Green	" Warren
" Jones	

Tellers: Mr. Fry and Mr. Green.

NOES, 34.

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

Tellers: Mr. W. Cooper and Mr. Ryan.

Resolved in the negative.

MR. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): Notwithstanding the division, he thought it was necessary to point out what [7.30 p.m.] Mr. Macarney said in 1912 on the introduction of the Public Service Superannuation Act, of which he was in charge—

"A special right is conceded to those of forty years of age and upwards. Upon paying a lesser contribution, they can pay as for retirement at the age of seventy years. It may be stated that all contributors otherwise are made to contribute in respect of retirement at the age of sixty-five years, and the contributions cease when the contributor arrives at that age. In the case of those officers to whom I have just referred, of forty and upwards, they can, if they so elect, contribute to four units of insurance and annuity payable at seventy years of age, in which case they pay a lesser sum."

That showed that in 1912 the House fully understood that the public servants had the right, if they took advantage of the scheme, to remain in the service till they were seventy.

Question put and passed.

SHERIFF.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
 “That £4,674 be granted for
 ‘Sheriff.’”
 Question put and passed.

STAMP DUTIES OFFICE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
 “That £11,167 be granted for ‘Stamp
 Duties Office.’”

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*) asked for an explanation of the increase in the vote for “postage, telegrams, railway fares and freights, printing, stationery, and incidentals,” from £1,500 to £5,000.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Most expenses under the headings mentioned, such as postage and telegrams, had increased considerably, and there had been an enormous expansion in the work of the office under the Act passed some time ago, as the revenue indicated. The actual expenditure last year was £4,859.

Question put and passed.

SUPREME COURTS.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
 “That £11,209 be granted for
 ‘Supreme Courts.’”
 Question put and passed.

TITLES.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL moved—
 “That £19,930 be granted for ‘Titles.’”

Mr. KING (*Logan*): He wished to draw attention again to the salary of the Registrar of Titles, to which he referred last year, together with the hon. member for Toowong. The Registrar of Titles had been Chief Commissioner of Stamps till he was promoted to his present office, and yet he was now receiving a salary of £575, or less than the salary of the present Commissioner of Stamp Duties of £650. The explanation given last year was that the Commissioner of Stamp Duties had received that salary on account of the special services he had rendered, he understood, in connection with the receipt by the Government of a large sum from the Yuill estate. He did not wish to detract from the work that Mr. Fitzpatrick had done in that connection; but, if the Attorney-General would look into the papers, he thought he would find that the present Registrar of Titles, who was then Chief Commissioner of Stamp Duties, did work equally as good as, and perhaps better than, the present Commissioner in tracing that loss or leakage. He understood the Attorney-General last year to say that the matter would receive consideration, and he hoped that he would see that a deserving officer got the remuneration to which he was entitled.

He had asked a question in regard to the recent increases of fees charged by the Real Property Office, and he had been told that they had been increased or amended by authority of the Real Property Acts, 1861-1887. Section 140 provided—

“It shall be lawful for the Registrar-General to charge and recover such fees as shall be appointed by the Governor of the said Colony, with the advice of the Executive Council, not in any case exceeding the several fees specified in the list marked R in the schedule hereto.”

Schedule R set out fees for certain specified services.

Mr. BRENNAN: Do they include all the fees the office may charge?

Mr. KING: Practically all. Provision was made that the Governor in Council might increase the fees for certain specified services up to the amounts specified in the schedule. He admitted that the Government had not increased them beyond the limits fixed in the schedule, but they had introduced fees for other services, which they had no legal right to do.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Which was done by previous Governments in 1885, 1903, and 1913.

Mr. KING: He did not think so. The fees had been increased, but on all previous occasions in accordance with the provisions of the schedule. They had been increased by a subterfuge. Take the case of an ordinary transfer of an allotment for which a man had paid £20. The man stamped it at a cost of 7s. 6d. He then used to go to the Real Property Office and lodge the transfer, and all he had to pay was a fee of 10s. for registration. Now, however, there was an additional fee for what they called a memorial, that was, for noting, which was not prescribed by the schedule, so that the total fees amounted to £1 7s. 6d., whilst, if the man wanted a new deed, he had to pay another £1, or £2 7s. 6d. for a little transaction. That was merely a subterfuge to duplicate the fees provided by the Act, and to get additional revenue. He was not objecting to the fees altogether, but the Government should put themselves in a proper and legal position by bringing a short and amending Bill to legalise the increases.

Question put and passed.

THE TREASURER.

TREASURY.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*) moved—
 “That £65,880 be granted for
 ‘Treasurer.’”

The number of officers was practically the same as last year, and the increase of some £12,000 in the vote comprised anticipated increases for exchange, commission, etc., in connection with various transactions, London payments, and the like, which might or might not be lighter.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): He thought they should have some kind of a report on the work that was being done in connection with the inspection of weights and measures, for which the amount required was £2,275. He did not think any of the work was done in the metropolitan area, because he believed that was attended to by the city council. He would like some information from the Treasurer as to where and how the duties of the inspectors were carried out.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): This vote was confined to the administration of the Treasury Department, over which the Treasurer had jurisdiction. That department dealt more or less with accounts, and on those accounts the Treasurer's Financial Statement was prepared. According to the Auditor-General's report, so far as the preparation of accounts and the Financial Statement were concerned, the work had been very well done by the staff of the Treasury.

The TREASURER: It is very gratifying to hear you say that.

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Mr. KERR: There was no gainsaying that the work of the Treasury officials had been very complicated of recent years—more so than in any other period in the administration of Queensland affairs. The Government had been faced with a difficulty in getting money, and they had from time to time utilised loan money, trust money, and consolidated revenue for various purposes, which meant a good deal of work in transferring amounts from one account to another. The policy had been followed of taking any money that was available for any particular purpose. That had happened more especially during the last few years, and the work entailed meant an addition to the staff.

The TREASURER: Where?

Mr. KERR: The number of employees in 1914-15 was twenty-nine, whilst the number to-day was forty-one, and the expenditure in connection with that alone was £38,000. The Treasury during this year had handled more money than had ever been handled in the history of Queensland. It showed the possibilities of this State, but, unfortunately, notwithstanding that amount of revenue handled by the Treasury, there was not the prosperity that existed in the State in 1914. The Treasurer's accounts had been twisted to an extent that it was very hard to find a word to express the extent. If he used the correct word, it would possibly be unparliamentary. The Treasurer had permitted money which had never been paid into consolidated revenue to be used to meet the ordinary commitments of the Treasury.

The TREASURER: No.

Mr. KERR: An amount of money to the extent of £42,000 had been diverted to meet the ordinary commitments of the Treasury.

The TREASURER: If we had a surplus of £154,000 why should we juggle with £42,000?

Mr. KERR: He would deal with that matter before he sat down. An amount of £145,000 had been utilised for the purpose of reducing deficits, and that amount had not been authorised by Parliament, and that the Treasury Department had exceeded the authorisation by a sum of something like £157,000.

The TREASURER: You have been grossly misled.

Mr. KERR: He had not. That was nothing more or less than a twisting of accounts. When they added the surplus of £9,000 to the £145,000 that was not authorised by Parliament, and then deducted the £42,000 commitment that should have been paid by the Treasury, they would see that the actual surplus should have been £112,000. Right throughout Queensland there was a great deal of unemployment, and there were many followers of the Government out of work, and it would not have been good policy on the part of the Government to have a surplus at that stage of £112,000. The accounts had not been strictly kept on the well laid down principles of previous Governments. The amount of £145,000 had been diverted to reduce the previous deficits, and other additional amounts had been unauthorised which should not have been utilised unless authority was given by Parliament for such purpose. The matter came before the Executive Council, but that was not Parliament. Parliament must retain one of the few things left to Queensland to-day, and that is the financial business. They were being overridden by the

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Executive Council, and the Executive Council should not handle such matters as authorising expenditure in the various departments. He was accusing the Treasurer, because he was the man responsible for the small surplus and for twisting the accounts. It had been done by the department under his jurisdiction, and in all probability under orders from the Executive Council.

Ten departments out of the twelve had overstepped the authorisation by Parliament. The Treasurer had got something like £20,000 by a new tax called the State tax, noted in the "Golden Casket" accounts. Those funds were being utilised to make the Government appear in a better position than they really were. The Treasurer was the responsible person for getting money to meet the commitments of the State. He had gone everywhere to get the money. The Premier went to America and missed. Then he went to London, and failed to secure money there; but recently the Government had successfully floated a "gamble" loan in America. Provision had been made for an increase of £18,000 to meet the exchange.

The TREASURER: No; £12,000.

Mr. KERR: He thought it would cost a good deal more before it was finished.

The TREASURER: I don't think so.

Mr. KERR: There was very little money, if any, for Queensland in England. They had to pay England over £2,000,000, and they would have to transfer the money raised in America to meet their commitments in England.

The TREASURER: You do not think we are going to leave it in America?

Mr. KERR: No; the Treasurer would not leave it there for two minutes. That increase of £12,000 was not going to meet the commitments of the Government in England to-day. The money would be brought from America to Queensland, and would be again transmitted to England, which would entail the cost of double exchange. The Government were responsible for the departing from the long-established principle in regard to the State finances, and the Treasurer was entirely responsible. The Trust Funds of the State were being utilised for various purposes.

The TREASURER: Which Trust Funds?

Mr. KERR: The various funds have been amalgamated. He could quote a hundred different accounts from the Auditor-General's report, but he was going to deal with them en bloc. The money from the Trust Funds had been applied to purposes that they should not have been applied to. The Treasurer should see that those Trust Funds were utilised for the progress of the country, such as the erection of workers' dwellings and for advances to settlers. The Government should never have put £1,500,000 into State enterprises. The Treasurer should see that the money was not expended in the wrong avenue. They could take Irvinebank—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman is not going to discuss the details of expenditure from Loan or Trust Funds. He may do that on the respective votes.

Mr. KERR: He was not dealing with details, but, more or less, with the principle on which those funds were utilised. He

knew that adjustments were made by previous Treasurers, but never to the extent that adjustments were required to-day. One of the planks of the Opposition [8 p.m.] was sound finance; but that policy had not been carried out by the present Government.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The Treasurer had replied to the hon. member who had just resumed his seat, particularly with regard to exchanges, by putting him off with a wave of the hand, and leading him to think that, probably, the extra amount of some £12,000 of the £50,000 for "Commission, Exchange, &c.," provided in the Estimates was for the new loan.

The TREASURER: Not necessarily.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He would like the Treasurer to let them know what the expenses were on the last occasion in connection with this particular vote. They had a right to know what amount was spent. He noticed that £38,000 was provided last year.

The TREASURER: We spent £400 more than that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was obliged to the hon. gentleman, who said that £38,400 was provided for the year ending 30th June last. Why was there such a big increase as £12,000 provided for this year? What arrangements were made in connection with the flotation of the loan which, for the moment, was suspended so far as flotation in Queensland was concerned? Were any special arrangements made in that regard? It was thought, judging by the Government Loan Bill which was introduced recently, that they would have to go immediately on the local market.

The TREASURER: You will find no statement of mine which will lead you to think that.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman was an adept at side-tracking. What was the reason for hurrying through that Bill? The hon. gentleman knew that it was necessary for the Government to raise money.

The TREASURER: Not immediately.

HON. W. H. BARNES: So far as he could see, the Government put their hand on pretty well everything that was available. The hon. gentleman had almost a mania for trying to get his hands on money. (Laughter.) They knew that several things had happened.

The TREASURER: One thing that happened when you were Treasurer was that the people fired you out.

HON. W. H. BARNES: This Government had done two or three things which had been noticeable to everybody. One was that they had taxed the people until they could scarcely tax them any more; the people could not bear any further burden. The Committee wanted to know, if £50,000 was the amount expected to be necessary for exchanges before the New York loan was floated, what was likely to be the amount charged this year?

The TREASURER: I am not a clairvoyant.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, and he knew the hon. gentleman was not a good Treasurer. There were facts in connection with the Estimates which showed that, so far as the Treasury was concerned, there had been, and there was continuing to be, wilful political mismanagement.

The TREASURER: No.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The fact remained that they had found the conduct of the Treasury unsatisfactory—not by the officers of the department, because anyone would know that they would try to direct the Treasurer rightly—a very difficult task. (Laughter.) The people realised the position they were in to-day. Finance was the crux of the position in Queensland to-day. The hon. gentleman must realise that upon the Treasurer really rested a great deal of the "deflation" that had taken place. He had said, "I cannot find the money to continue the extravagance, and the departments must cut down." What he (Mr. Barnes) objected to was that in the midst of the financial difficulties the Treasurer had not attempted to grip the big problems which faced Queensland. The hon. gentleman had a right to give them every detail in connection with various matters.

There were harbour board matters, for instance, to which he could perhaps refer in a general way. He urged the Treasurer to look seriously at the finances of Queensland, and to realise that, while he was making provision for certain expenditure, the pinch was upon the people to whom he had a duty in that regard.

He would like the Treasurer to tell the Committee whether he knew anyone with the surname of Griffith, who was in one of the departments in the far North, and if that person had received notice of dismissal.

The TREASURER: That can hardly be discussed on this vote.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was a matter which concerned the Treasurer, and, whether the information was given on that vote or on the sugar mills vote, the matter would come up. If the policy of victimisation was going to be brought into the Treasury, it was a dangerous thing. The hon. gentleman bluntly said that he had dismissed a man because he had the courage of his convictions outside. The man had said certain things which everyone knew, judging by his actions, were true; and yet what did the Treasurer do? The hon. gentleman had had in the forefront of his banner all along, "No victimisation"; yet the very first time that somebody dared to offend the Serene Highness who presided over the Treasury, his name had been marked.

Mr. BRENNAN: You cannot have insubordination.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It was an extraordinary thing that, when a man had views which ran counter to the hon. gentleman, he received a letter from the department. The hon. member for Bowen had taken the matter up. Telegrams had come from the North, and the chairman of the shire council said that this man was an excellent servant and was doing his work well.

The TREASURER: The chairman of the shire council is not in the Treasury Department.

HON. W. H. BARNES: He was a citizen, and was fearless in his attitude. The Treasurer forgot the plank of "No victimisation," which was in his party's platform, and acted against that principle. He asked the Treasurer to explain why this man had been dismissed in such a curt way, although his character was good.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. Fihelly, *Paddington*): He desired to reply to the comments of hon. members opposite. The leader

Hon. J. A. Fihelly;

of the Nationalist party referred last year to the administration of weights and measures, and he had then informed the hon. gentleman that that work was divided between the Treasury and the local authorities. The local authorities had certain powers delegated to them, and charged the necessary fees.

The hon. member for Enoggera devoted himself to what might be called "high finance," or "frenzied finance." One could not exaggerate the importance of finance in so far as it related to the Government, but he was afraid that a young member—

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He is doing very well. If other hon. members followed his example and studied as he does, they would soon make their mark.

The TREASURER: The statement of the hon. member for Bulimba, who was a Treasurer at one time, dissipated the suggestion that there might be any jealousy towards the hon. member for Enoggera in regard to financial matters. (Laughter.) The hon. member for Enoggera referred to the sum of £145,000, and by some mysterious wave of a magic wand deduced the conclusion that the Government had a surplus of £112,000. The surplus was £154,000, of which £145,000 was devoted to the liquidation of past deficits.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Deficits of the Labour party.

The TREASURER: If the hon. member would look in the newspapers, he would find that the Government were endeavouring to renew £700,000 of Treasury bills which represented the deficits of Governments of hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Bulimba brought up two matters. One was that the vote for commission and exchange had risen from £38,000 to £50,000. They had spent £38,400 last year and expected to spend £50,000 this year. They were paying now an interest bill in London of over £3,000,000. The £1,000,000 floated at the Bank of England last year, which was not taken altogether, represented at least £60,000 extra in interest at 6 per cent., or £50,000 extra at 5 per cent. They had to pay commission, exchange, and the like, and it mounted up. To use the phrase of the hon. member for Enoggera, they could not juggle with that account.

The hon. member for Bulimba had raised the question of a gentleman who had recently been dismissed from the Proserpine sugar mill. He could not discuss the matter at that stage, but he would give the hon. gentleman full information with regard to the dismissal and the opportunity of perusing the papers which had his minute upon them.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I have all the particulars. They do not reflect credit upon you.

The TREASURER: The only member who had approached him in that matter was the hon. member for Oxley. He said to that hon. member, "Take the papers and look at them; I have put my own minutes upon them." He had dealt with that officer in the only way in which an insubordinate officer could be dealt with. They could not conduct the affairs of the department if they were going to allow gross insubordination.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Was there any insubordination during his working hours?

The TREASURER: That was immaterial. (Ironical Opposition laughter.) At that stage he merely protested against any suggestion

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that he was endeavouring to evade a discussion.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He had the highest recommendations.

The TREASURER: He certainly would not get any recommendation from him.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): No information had yet been given as to when the Treasurer anticipated placing on the market the loan authority to raise which had recently been granted by Parliament. There seemed to be some very grave doubt as to what was going to be the net amount of the loan floated in New York. No doubt, it would assist to pay the amount which the hon. gentleman not only had to borrow from the Bank of England, but which he had to get renewed. The hon. gentleman knew that the Agent-General at the end of December last had to show that there was practically no money in the till in London. Was the hon. gentleman going to the old country to make his peace? Was he going to make some effort to re-establish the good name of Queensland in the old country?

Mr. BRENNAN: Re-establish the old link.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member for Toowoomba would do certain things willingly.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the hon. gentleman will discuss the Estimates.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He was endeavouring to do it, but other hon. members were sidetracking him. In the interests of the State, they had a right to know when the Treasurer was likely to place a portion or the whole of that loan upon this or any other market. The Bill did not impose any restriction on the hon. gentleman, and, if he wanted to add millions to Queensland's debt, he could do it. He need scarcely point out that this Government had put on the community burdens which had never been put on them in anything like the same proportion previously.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): Some confusion existed in the mind of the hon. member for Bulimba. The Loan Bill passed a fortnight ago had nothing whatever to do with the loan in America or any other loan for a specific amount. It was an authorising measure. The Government had ample authority to float a loan to the extent of over £3,000,000. The only other question the hon. gentleman required answering was whether the Government were going to float a local loan. They would, first of all, endeavour to negotiate the extension or conversion of the £700,000 deficits bequeathed to them by the Opposition, whose deficits falling due next year amounted to £1,124,000. Fortunately for the Government, in the amalgamation of the State and Commonwealth Savings Bank, £400,000 Treasury bills had been retained in the Bank. They had renewed that at 4½ per cent. for twenty years—an excellent bargain, he thought. The other £700,000 they would endeavour to float as soon as possible. Advertisements were appearing in the Press now explaining that transaction. Following that he thought they could see their way pretty clearly for some time. They were now down to an average loan expenditure of £2,500,000 a year.

Mr. EDWARDS: Are you going to lend any to the local authorities?

The TREASURER: At the present time it was far better to invest in connection with

the developmental work of local authorities than to spend money in building railways. At a suitable time the House would be informed if it were proposed to float any further loan in London, in Australia, or in America.

Mr. SIZER: Will the House be sitting?

The TREASURER: He was a Treasurer, not a seer.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): He wanted to draw the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that the hon. gentleman was administering the affairs of the Treasury for Parliament and not for a party. On financial matters they should be well informed, and there should be no hesitation in giving hon. members the fullest information. He hoped the Treasurer would be more inclined to stick to the dollars than he had done to the notes. The notes had vanished very quickly, because they were common currency. He noticed the Treasurer had said the Government had reduced their deficit of 1916-17 by issuing Treasury bills. That was not a reduction. It was passing it on to the future and saddling posterity with the burden. It made the Government look all right; but it was bad business for the country. The Opposition members were concerned with the advancement of the country. The Government should live within their income, and do everything possible to see that every pound or dollar earned its full value. If the Treasurer did that, it would not be a question of living from loan to loan, or from recess to recess, but of living from year to year, and developing the country so that it would be wealth-producing, and their revenue would be equal to their expenditure. They would be able to reduce the amount of taxation which it was necessary to impose on the country, and give industry a chance. Up to the present time the hands of the Government had been upon the throat of industry, and every time more money was required the grip tightened. To-day industry was almost strangled. Let the Treasurer make a name for himself by studying economy.

Question put and passed.

ANALYST.

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

“That £8,139 be granted for ‘Analyst.’”

By a scrutiny of the Estimates, hon. members would find the staff had been reduced by one, and that the vote represented an increase of £179 over that of last year, which covered merely automatic increases to different members of the staff.

Question put and passed.

HARBOURS AND RIVERS.

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

“That £4,005 be granted for ‘Harbours and Rivers.’”

This vote, in the main, was for the Dry Dock. They were asking for £109 more than was voted last year. The staff had been reduced by one. Speaking from memory, he thought they were doing with one watchman less.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): He would like to urge upon the Treasurer the benefit which would accrue to Brisbane if they had a larger dock.

The TREASURER: You know that is not practical politics just now.

Mr. SWAYNE: He did not recognise that at all. Hundreds of thousands of pounds had been spent on other enterprises, not one of which had done so much good as [8.30 p.m.] a larger dock would have done.

Only the other day a representative of a large shipping firm, with engineering works here, said that something like £30,000 or £40,000 of work went South every year because of the lack of a larger dock in Brisbane. He knew how generally it was deplored that there was so little work in the trade here, and that there was not room for their young people to learn it. That would be largely set right if they had a larger dock. The Government had lately been successful in floating a loan, and he trusted that, instead of putting the money into State enterprises, most of which had resulted in losses, and not one of which had made work for another individual—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member will not be in order in discussing the State enterprises on the Harbours and Rivers vote.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was simply pointing out that the money spent in that way would be far better spent on another dock, and also assist to cope with the unemployment problem. He thought they had four docks in Sydney, each 600 feet long, and the result was that a large amount of work went to Sydney that might be kept here.

Question put and passed.

LAND AND INCOME TAX.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. H. Fihelly, *Paddington*) moved—

“That £51,915 be granted for ‘Land and Income Tax.’”

It was purely a clerical vote. There was an increase of nine officers and about £5,000 in the total vote.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): He would like to know what the Treasurer intended to do about the proposal to average the incomes of primary producers over a period?

The TREASURER: I shall table that Bill this week or early next week.

Mr. MOORE: He was wondering what effect that Bill was going to have on the income tax receipts. He imagined the receipts had already been reduced very considerably.

The TREASURER: We allowed for that.

Mr. MOORE: They had not allowed for the general reduction that must take place owing to the slump in the price of cattle and stock generally.

The TREASURER: So far the receipts are above the anticipations.

Mr. MOORE: That might be so, but they had not yet felt the effects of the slump. What had been coming in had been coming in for last year. When the income tax forms were sent out it was not made clear that a man engaged in dairying or agriculture could deduct the amount of his land tax from his income tax. That, he thought, had been proved conclusively by the report of the Commissioner, which showed that only £2,610 had been allowed under that head. Had the farmers known that they were allowed to deduct their land tax, it would have made a great deal of difference. They only showed it as a deduction from income, which was a very different thing.

The TREASURER: We have not found one who has not deducted it.

Mr. Moore.]

Mr. MOORE: He had found five members in that Chamber who had failed to deduct it. They had put it in as a deduction from income instead of deducting it from income tax. The same subterfuge was adopted last year, and the Commissioner was collecting tax which he had no right to collect merely because the people did not know what they had a right to deduct. The income tax form was too intricate for them to make out. They were always being told that the farmers paid a very small amount; but, when they came to look into the question, they would find that in land and income tax they were paying a very considerable amount. The amount of remissions also was very small, and there was always difficulty in securing remissions. A man might make out a perfectly clear case, and yet it took months and months even to get a reply. He knew of some cases in which they had not got any reply at all.

The TREASURER: Perhaps they did not put in a return.

Mr. MOORE: They put in returns. The Commissioner was very careful about that. A large number also were paying tax at the rate for undeveloped lands, because they did not understand that, if they had a paddock on which they were running stock, they could put down their value as improvements for the purpose of determining whether the land was undeveloped or not.

The TREASURER: I will accept any sound suggestions you make.

Mr. MOORE: The Treasurer accepted them, but that was the last they heard of them. In the Commissioner's report they would find that the taxable income of dairy farmers, who were supposed to have made huge profits during the last couple of years, stopped short at £1,000—not one of them went over that amount—whereas almost all the other classes of taxpayers went on beyond it. He was satisfied that prices had fallen to such an extent that farmers were going to be very hard put to it this year to pay their tax. Prices of cream and milk had fallen to pre-war levels. (Government dissent.) In Queensland the price of milk for cheese was 4½d. per gallon, which it was in 1914, although he admitted that the price of cheese was higher to-day than it was then. Still, the price of material and the cost of production were higher.

The TREASURER: As a matter of fact, butter is dearer to-day here than it is in Victoria.

Mr. MOORE: Butter was going down here every day. A large number of farmers would have to pay income tax when they would not have the wherewithal to pay it.

The TREASURER: They will be very generously dealt with.

Mr. MOORE: They had heard all that sort of thing about the land tax, but look at the amount of the remissions! He was doubtful, because he had found that so many promises had not been kept. They were told that the land tax was going to fall on the owners of large city properties. The amount of land tax collected on town and city lands was £207,151, whereas the tax collected on country lands was £252,317, and, when they recognised that only 8 per cent. of the land in Queensland had been alienated and was liable to pay tax, they would realise what a burden it was to the man on the land. They had also to realise that the heaviness of the tax on large estates had depreciated the value of the land to such an extent that the

value of the adjoining land was depreciated too—it was not so much the amount of money the owners of that adjoining land had to pay as the depreciation of its value that burdened them.

Mr. PEASE: Do you ever read the advertisements of sales of farms?

Mr. MOORE: He did, and he could show the hon. member land on the Western line within 150 miles of Brisbane which was cheaper to-day than the price paid for it thirty or forty years ago.

The TREASURER: Have you read an account of the sales at Kenilworth?

Mr. MOORE: He did not know where the place was. They could buy land cheaper on the Downs alongside the railway than it could be bought for before the railway was built. When the railway was built the land was bought for £1 10s. per acre, and now it could be bought for £1 5s. owing to the taxation of the present Government.

The TREASURER: Take a place like Widgee Scrub—that was sold for 2s. 6d. per acre and bought back at £2 per acre.

Mr. MOORE: He was not dealing with scrub land; he was dealing with ordinary agricultural land.

The HOME SECRETARY: Who ought to pay the tax?

Mr. MOORE: The taxes should not be collected to the extent they were being collected to-day. An amount of £2,460,000 had been collected by this Government in six years in taxes that had not been collected by any previous Government.

The HOME SECRETARY: A poll tax was stopped out of the men's pay before this Government came in.

Mr. MOORE: He was not talking about a poll tax. Every working man in Queensland had to pay a poll tax if he wanted to work. He had to pay a poll tax to join a union. Over £11,000,000 had been collected in land and income tax since this Government came into power.

The HOME SECRETARY: In the big cities.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. gentleman should look at the land tax tables to see whether the big cities or the country people were paying the land tax. The tax derived from city and town lands was £207,000, whereas the tax derived from country lands was £252,317.

The TREASURER: The country towns and country areas.

Mr. MOORE: It was purely country land. Hon. members opposite were always talking about the city man paying the land tax. He did not.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Does not the producer pay the storkeeper's tax?

Mr. MOORE: The enormous amount of £2,410,000 was derived last year in income tax from the small population of 750,000.

The TREASURER: The working man is protected though.

Mr. MOORE: Why did the Treasurer go back on his own statement that it was the working man who suffered and the producer who paid? The worker had suffered because of the amount of taxation that was dragged out of his pocket by the Government. The people did not believe the Treasurer's statement at the time he made it, but they could see that it was correct to-day.

The TREASURER: You cannot convince a person who pays income tax that he does not pay it.

Mr. MOORE: Surely the hon. gentleman did not suppose that the big business houses paid their own income tax? The people who bought the goods had to pay it. The primary producers had to pay it, because they could not add the tax to the price of their produce.

The HOME SECRETARY: Why is butter dearer in Queensland, which is an exporting State, than in Victoria, which is an importing State?

Mr. MOORE: He did not know that it was.

Mr. CORSER: Victoria is not a butter-importing State at the present time.

Mr. MOORE: Only about 5 per cent. of the butter produced in Queensland was sold locally. According to that morning's paper, a record number of boxes for this time of the year had been put in the cold store for grading. All those matters counted when it came to the development of the land. It was a bad thing for Queensland when that amount of taxation had to be taken from the development of the land. The Government were beginning to recognise the destitution and distress that was brought about by their enormous taxation. Hon. members opposite had spoken about the unequal distribution of wealth; but it was not the unequal distribution of wealth, but the unequal use of the money, that mattered. One man put his brains into his job and another would not, and the result was that the man who worked got more money than the other man.

Mr. BRENNAN interjected.

The TREASURER: You will agree with the hon. member for Toowoomba that he grew the best wheat on the Downs last season.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will pay less attention to the interjections and more attention to the vote under discussion.

Mr. MOORE: It was a very serious matter, and as they might be closing the session at any time they would be still in the same unfortunate position that they had been in years past—of paying heavy tax in one good season out of four. There was the unfortunate position of the wheatgrowers who had no wheat one year and had to pay a double dose of taxation the next year. It was unfortunate that these people should have to pay a double tax, and it should be averaged over a number of years. They wanted a Bill brought in, but he was afraid it was not going to be brought in when he saw the estimate put down for income tax for the year. He was sure the Treasurer was going to be a long way out in his estimate if that Bill was taken into consideration.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fibely, *Paddington*): He hoped they were not going to have any serious dissertation on taxation on that vote. An opportunity had been given on the Financial Statement and the Address in Reply. At the end of the week, or some time next week, he would introduce an amending taxation measure to deal with the averaging or carrying over of the incomes of those engaged in agricultural and dairying pursuits, when hon. members would have an ample opportunity of debating the merits or demerits of the taxation system. The hon. member for Aubigny was dubious about the amount the Government would get from taxation that year. So

far their forecast was proving pretty accurate, and they were getting in all the revenue they had to get in, though it would not be as much as last year. Hon. members could rest assured that what there was they would have. The matter of repudiation so dear to the hon. member for Kennedy could not be dealt with on this vote. That was gone and done with.

Mr. JONES: I am not done with it, and there are a lot more besides me.

The TREASURER: It was quite hopeless attempting to deal any further with the vote. The long sitting day had rather upset the equanimity of hon. members opposite.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): If there was one department that the Government had built up, it was the Taxation Department. The Premier had stated that the State and the Commonwealth would get the two Taxation Departments under one roof, so that the two sets of taxes would be collected by the one set of machinery. He understood that reasonable conditions for the amalgamation of the Commonwealth and State Taxation Departments had been drawn up and adopted by some of the States. It would be a good thing—looked at from the viewpoint of economy—to amalgamate the two departments, because it would enable the Government to save money which might be used to provide employment in other avenues. It would also enable them to reduce taxation somewhat. The Country party were anxious to secure the averaging of taxation over a certain period, particularly in the stock and dairying industries. The Treasurer stated that the Bill was likely to be introduced very early, but now notice had been given of a motion of want of confidence in the Government the Opposition would probably have an opportunity of bringing it forward themselves.

The State had certainly built up this department. In 1914, when the Government came into office, there was not one penny of land tax collected in this State—that was the preserve of the local authorities.

[9 p.m.]

The TREASURER: Do you know why there was no land taxation?

Mr. CORSER: Because past Governments were always anxious to balance the ledger, and show a reasonable surplus, without taxing the people whom they should be encouraging instead of taxing off the land—that was, the man who owned a bit of freehold.

Mr. PEASE: Would you impose a poll tax?

Mr. CORSER: The Labour party imposed a poll tax on every man who joined a union. When a past Government inflicted a poll tax in a bad year a long time ago there was a great protest, because a section of the people who were not contributing taxation were called upon to pay 10s.; but the real reason for hon. members opposite objecting to it was because they wanted the right reserved to themselves to place a tax on anyone before he could obtain employment. No man could obtain an industrial job without paying that poll tax. That went towards organising for Labour purposes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member knows that that has nothing to do with the vote.

Mr. CORSER: He would not refer to it any further. (Laughter.) They found that the income tax for 1915-16 was only £766,559. Previous to this Government coming into

Mr. Corser.]

office £600,000 was sufficient income tax to get from the taxpayers; but to-day they had established a record for increasing taxation. Instead of £600,000 being collected for income tax, they were now collecting £2,410,171 per annum. They would not mind if that income tax went towards making the investments or the businesses of the State prosperous; but they found that £1,750,000 of it went towards making right the bad management of the railways.

At 9.5 p.m.,

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

Mr. CORSER: They protested against the land tax, because they thought that the right of land taxation should be preserved for local authorities. There was a Federal land tax on £5,000 worth of land and over, which, in many instances, was a very just tax. They should not impose a State land tax when they had such vast unalienated areas of land. Why should they call upon the pioneers who took up land in the earlier days to pay land tax?

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Pioneers in Queen street!

Mr. CORSER: That was the old kerosene-case piffle that they heard at election times. The land tax was part of the Government's policy of destruction of freeholds. They were not going to confiscate freeholds, although that was really their policy; but they were going to bring about confiscation by taxing people off the land—they did not want anyone to hold freehold. As soon as the Opposition had an opportunity of getting into office they would deal fairly with freehold landowners, and enable anyone to decide whether they would have that better form of tenure in the interests of the State. He sincerely hoped that the Minister was going to introduce, at the earliest possible date, a Bill to allow of the averaging of the income tax, more particularly with regard to rural industries.

The TREASURER: I will do so this week or next week.

Mr. CORSER: As the Minister gave them that assurance, they would let the vote go through.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*): He thought that, if any of the 40,000 taxpayers in Queensland were to be present to-night and see the hilarity with which the vote was being treated, they would be somewhat disgusted and disappointed. In discussing this vote, he wanted hon. members to understand that they were really discussing a tax upon thrift which existed in Queensland. They could, if they wished, put their finger on one of the main reasons why Queensland was stagnating at the present time; but, instead of that, they treated the question with a levity and hilarity which was most unbecoming, and which did not help to re-establish that confidence which was so essential. He was not going to enter into a discussion as to the effects of the income tax, because he did not think the vote permitted of it, and they had the Treasurer's statement that the amendment of the Income Tax Act was to be introduced before the session closed.

There were one or two matters in connection with that vote on which he wanted information. In the first place, he would like to know from the Treasurer just when the effects of the super tax would disappear. It

was within the knowledge of the Committee that the super tax was imposed for the duration of the war and a certain period thereafter, and he would like to know just when the time would arrive when they would impose no further super tax, and he would like information as to exactly what revenue last year was derived from the super tax. He found that from companies, both foreign and local, the Government received something like £130,000 in super tax, but, when he came to look for the super tax which was collected from individuals, he could not find any table giving that information. He should appreciate it very much if the Treasurer would give that information, because they had to look forward to the time when the super tax was going to be wiped out and when the revenue at present derived from that source would disappear.

He asked the Treasurer some time during the present session whether the pastoral leaseholders had claimed any rebate on the amount which they had paid in income tax by reason of the retrospective rents which had been imposed on them. During the year ended 30th June 1920, £16,201 was collected in respect of those retrospective rents, and for the year ended 30th June, 1921, £349,522 was collected by the same means of extortion. It seemed inconceivable that the men who were called upon to pay retrospective rents to such an enormous extent had not made some claim for a rebate of income tax. The Treasurer had informed him in answer to his question that no such claim had been made, but possibly by now the hon. gentleman had some different information on the subject. All those rebates of income tax which were claimed were going to reduce whatever additional revenue the Government were deriving from the imposition of the retrospective rents.

Another point on which he wanted information was this: He had been endeavouring to ascertain the true position in regard to the State cattle stations, and to find out just what income tax the State would have derived from the holders of those cattle stations if they had not been acquired by the State Government. The State had a large circle of those stations now, and had replaced by State enterprises quite a number of individuals who were conducting those stations privately, and there was no doubt the Income Tax Commissioner derived a very considerable amount of revenue by taxation from those private owners. In order to arrive at a true comparison between the effects of State management as against private management of those stations, it would be very interesting to know exactly what revenue the Income Tax Commissioner derived from those station owners for the three years prior to their acquisition by the State. The Treasurer, in answer to a question some time ago, stated that in about a fortnight's time the information would be available, and he would very much like to have that information. They were in the lap of the gods so far as the closure of the session was concerned, and they had to be thankful for small mercies. Progress was forced on quite unmindful as to what the community required or what the representatives of a majority of the people sitting on that side of the Chamber asked for. They must be thankful for small mercies, and they looked forward to the time when responsible Government would again be introduced.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): Certain statements were made from the other

[*Mr. Corser.*]

side of the Chamber from time to time in regard to the tax paid in Queensland as compared with the amount paid in the other States, and he proposed to compare the taxation paid in Queensland in connection with land tax and income tax with the taxation paid in New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia. Queensland at the present time paid a land tax equal to 12s. 5d. a head over a population of 750,000 people. That land tax was introduced in 1915. Before 1915, they paid no land tax at all. In New South Wales they paid ½d. per head over a population of 2,096,000; Victoria, over a population of 1,530,000 people, paid a land tax equal to 4s. 3d. per head; in South Australia, with a population of 494,867, they paid a land tax of 6s. 3d. per head.

The TREASURER: Why not say how much it amounts to per taxpayer?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He was giving the amount per head for the whole of the people in the State. In regard to income tax in Queensland, they paid an amount equal to 63s. 10d. per head; in New South Wales they paid equal to 22s. 10d. per head; in Victoria they paid 12s. 1d. per head; and in South Australia they paid 22s. per head. Yet their friends on the other side expected the primary producers of this State to produce foodstuffs as cheaply as they could in the other States. It did not matter whether a man worked in the city or worked in the country, the fact remained that for every man they had on the land and for every woman and child in the State, they paid a land tax in Queensland equal to 12s. 5d. per head. The same thing applied in connection with income tax. It was all very well to ask, "Why don't you specify the people who pay income tax and land tax?" It was the people as a whole who paid the taxes. Every man, woman, and child on a farm was called upon to pay 63s. 10d. per head in income tax, due to the sympathy shown to the man on the land by the Treasurer and other hon. members on the other side. Many hon. members did not appreciate the fact that the Country party had repeatedly asked that income should be averaged over a period of five years in regard to income tax. He understood that the Treasurer had made a definite statement that he was going to take that matter into consideration.

The TREASURER: I said definitely that this week or early next week I will introduce a Bill.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The hon. gentleman was going down to Melbourne very shortly. Was he going to take the Bill down there with him?

The TREASURER: I am going to table the Bill here. Even if it is necessary to "gag" the Opposition, that Bill will be passed this session.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He knew the Treasurer was capable of "gagging" anybody, and it was a pity he did not "gag" himself occasionally. (Laughter.) He was very pleased to have the hon. gentleman's assurance that he was going to introduce a Bill to provide for the average of incomes over a certain period. It was going to make a very vast difference whether the Treasurer was going back to 1918, 1919, and 1920, or was going to confine it only to 1920 and 1921.

He hoped the Treasurer would consider the incidence of the income tax in regard to the reserves of co-operative companies. At the

present time they had many co-operative companies which were unable to build up reserves owing to the fact that they were called upon to pay very heavy income tax on the reserves they were carrying forward. No one would deny that the co-operative companies invariably used their reserves for the very best purpose. Many of those companies had gone into districts in which the Secretary for Public Lands was opening up lands, or had opened them during the last two or three years. Without going to the Government and asking for assistance, they had started co-operative companies and given them the experienced management they had in their own co-operative companies. Only recently they had the case of a company which, unfortunately, showed a profit of £368 at the end of the year. Perhaps some hon. gentlemen opposite would argue that co-operative companies had no right to show a profit; but they had to show a profit at certain times—they could not help themselves—and, when they showed a profit at the end of the financial year, the Income Tax Commissioner had the power to impose a tax which took away practically a fifth of the £368. Let them imagine what it meant to a weak co-operative company to be called upon by the Commissioner to pay such a tax on every £1 they made in the shape of profits; although, in many instances, at the time they were called upon to pay that tax the profit had already been distributed in the shape of bonus payments. It seemed to be quite unfair and unreasonable. That money was not hidden away; it was invested for the furtherance of the co-operative movement. It was to the co-operative movement that their friends opposite would have to look in the future in order to bring about the good feeling they hoped to see brought about between the producer and the consumer. If they could produce their foodstuffs at a rate a little less than it was now, the Treasurer ought to assist by giving those co-operative companies some further consideration in the amending Bill he proposed to bring forward.

Mr. GLEDSON: You are talking about the Federal income tax.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The hon. member for Ipswich imagined he knew everything. That hon. member knew very little about the tax the co-operative companies were called upon to pay. He (Mr. Roberts) always understood that the justice of a law was judged by the capability of the people to carry the burden imposed upon them. Those who represented country and farming constituencies knew very well the enormous burden that was cast upon the shoulders of the small farmers by the incidence of the State land tax and income tax. They were told they could deduct their income tax from their land tax if the income tax was the smaller amount; and if, on the other hand, the income tax was larger than the land tax, they could deduct the land tax. But that did not relieve the situation.

The fall in the price of land should receive the serious consideration of the Treasurer. They could not send too capable a man to revalue the lands at present prices. The general method was to take a land sale. If a man particularly wanted a certain piece of land, and paid £1 or £1 10s. an acre more for it than any other man in the district would give—and it was absolutely reasonable that he should, because it would suit him better than anyone else—the land tax assessor

Mr. J. H. C. Roberts.]

invariably came along and said that man had bought this piece of land at, say, £4 an acre, and therefore the land in the district was worth £3 an acre unimproved. That was not a correct deduction. That was what they had to fight against in the country districts. The Treasurer should ask the Commissioner to give him a list of the refunds made during this financial year. Those refunds probably were decided upon in May or June of last year; but, as the Treasurer wanted to show a surplus, he said, "We will not pay these out till July." The result was that the refunds were being made now. If the Treasurer would obtain from the Commissioner a return showing the refunds made, he believed he would be astounded at what it contained. People asked for refunds who were absolutely unable to pay the land tax. Consequently the land tax was unjust and unfair in its incidence, so far as farming lands were concerned. The position would be improved if the Treasurer would accept the reduction in their land values. The Government would not do that; their ambition was to keep up land values. The Government made them prove—in many cases an impossible task—that the land values had gone down.

The TREASURER: How would you view, say, a general valuation for Federal, State, and local authority affairs?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He did not see why he should be asked that question.

The TREASURER: I value your advice upon things on which I have already made up my mind.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: His advice to the Treasurer was to give it still further consideration, and see if he was not able to arrive at some satisfactory conclusion. The Treasurer was quite aware of the fact that butter and cheese had shown a very considerable fall in price. As late as yesterday they had a notification in the Press that wheat had receded to somewhere in the vicinity of 4s. 4d. per bushel in Adelaide. That was going to be a very serious matter to those farmers who had wheat. He appealed to the Treasurer to give them an average of incomes over a period of at least five years.

The TREASURER: Wait for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He would do so. He had noticed that the following had been the revenue per head of population in Queensland:—

	£	s.	d.	
1914-15	10	12	10	per head.
1915-16	11	6	6	per head.
1916-17	11	15	5	per head.
1917-18	12	6	8	per head.
1918-19	13	11	2	per head.
1919-20	15	11	6	per head.
1920-21	17	1	3	per head.

At 9.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

They were told that they had to economise, that times were bad—and they appreciated the fact that they were bad. They found it very difficult to get money and to carry out the enterprises in which they were engaged. The prices of all the commodities they were producing had been reduced very considerably, and yet the Government were taking more money out of their pockets day by day and week by week. The increase in taxation fell just as heavily on their shoulders in the

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country as on the shoulders of the people in the large centres of population, and he appealed to the Treasurer to give the primary producers preferential treatment in respect to land and income tax. The land tax had probably had the desired effect of bursting up large estates, but it had also kept the noses of many men on small farms so close to the grindstone that they never seemed to get out of one groove. The Secretary for Railways spoke about getting into a groove. The man on the land was in a groove because of the taxes that the Treasurer and his friends were continually putting upon him, and he was likely to remain there for a very long time unless the Treasurer gave him far more sympathetic treatment in the future than in the past. He claimed to be the friend of the man on the land.

The TREASURER: The friend of mankind.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He was not going to fight him on that point, but, if he was the friend of the farmer, let him bring a certain amount of common sense and sweet reasonableness to bear on the amending Bill he proposed to introduce, in which case he (Mr. Roberts) felt sure they would obtain a measure that would give them some relief.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): The farmers did not appreciate the actions of members like the hon. member for Pittsworth, who came into the Chamber and made wild statements about the "poor unfortunate farmers." Those men had got a very good return and were very pleased with the Labour Government. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: How did you get on amongst the farmers at the last election?

Mr. BRENNAN: They gave him an equal vote. He found from the Commissioner's report that last year 669 cane farmers paid £20,236 in income tax, or .94 per cent. of the total tax; that 563 dairy farmers paid £6,009, or .28 per cent. of the total tax; and that 122 fruit farmers paid £1,589, or .07 per cent. of the total tax, and 621 mixed farmers paid £7,173, or .33 per cent. of the total tax. They knew that farmers had been taken down by being put on land in places where they had to dig themselves out, as it were, and yet they were paying very little land tax. On page 2 of the sixth annual report of the Commissioner on Land Tax, he found that the number of farmers who owned land valued at £1,280 and under was 11,518, the amount of tax charged being £18,659, or 4.06 per cent. of the total tax charged on all lands. Why was there a continual roar about farmers from hon. members on the other side? The farmers were well off to-day.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Where are they well off?

Mr. BRENNAN: In every part of his electorate. But they had so many scarecrows representing them and telling them that they were ruined that they did not get a fair show.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They tell me there is nothing better than you up there for the caterpillar pest. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: He was not going to allow these champions of Chinese labour to pretend to be the friends of the farmers and say that the farmers did not pay tax. The farmers objected to be treated in that way. The hon. member for Pittsworth was unfair in coming into the House in his bellicose, bombastic way and decrying the farmers.

particularly as he had no seat left to him to-day. The people on the Downs could not stand that kind of defamation.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You are never up there.

Mr. BRENNAN: He was there to protect the farmers, and protest against the conduct of such misrepresentatives of the farmers as the hon. members for Drayton, East Toowoomba, and Aubigny. The farmers did not object to pay taxes, because they were doing well to-day, and they were proud to be under a Labour Government. (Opposition laughter.) True farmers' representatives must do something to protect their rights and protest against the actions of calamity howlers, those dirty birds of Queensland on the other side, who were always fouling their own nests. Whilst he was in that Chamber he would always protect the Darling Downs, which he had always represented faithfully.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): He would challenge the Treasurer, and the hon. gentleman could refer the matter to the Taxation Commissioner for his opinion. He would ask the Treasurer to get the information from the Commissioner for Taxes as to how much land tax would have to be paid by a man who purchased 1,000 acres of land for £4,300. That was the amount of land bought by many people who came from the South and who purchased land with the intention of dividing it between their sons afterwards. Land taxation had already confiscated 25 per cent. of the value of such a farm.

The TREASURER: Seeing that you know all this, why not take us into your confidence and tell us who this person is, where the land is, and what tax is paid?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It applied to any amount of land on the Darling Downs.

The TREASURER: If there is any amount, you surely can quote one instance.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The amount of tax could be capitalised at 6 per cent., and he challenged the hon. gentleman to say that that would not wipe out £1,000 of that £4,000. Still, taxation was charged on the £4,000. The taxation on that amount was somewhere about £70 a year, taken at a guess. A buyer who came along to buy that 1,000 acres would say, "What land tax do you pay?" and the reply would be, "About £70," and the buyer would say, "I will have to give you £1,000 less for your land than if there was no land tax." He would challenge the hon. member for Toowoomba to go to the Commissioner to find out the amount of taxation.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): It had been suggested that, in view of the huge success accomplished in regard to the amalgamation of the State and Commonwealth Savings Banks, the Government might give consideration to the proposal to unify the land and income tax systems of the State and Commonwealth. If, as had been pointed out, one taxation authority in a community would be quite sufficient to meet the exigencies of the situation, all the necessary adjustments could be made afterwards. If, as they were assured by hon. members opposite, the operation of the land and income taxes was irksome, he ventured to assert that they were made doubly irksome by the fact that there were two separate taxing authorities. The simplification, the amalgamation, or unification of the two systems surely must be within the near future impressed upon the average

thinking person. The present position could not be tolerated for ever and ever. He would like to see the Government take the initiative in this regard, seeing that there had been such a successful ending to the amalgamation of the Savings Banks. It might need to be discussed at the conferences held from time to time by the Premiers and Treasurers of the various States of the Commonwealth. The hon. member for Drayton had mentioned that the land tax was very heavy on an estate valued at £4,300 unimproved value. The improved value could be taken in round figures at twice that amount, which would bring it to between £8,000 and £9,000. A farmer who launched out to that extent was by no means unable to contribute some little mite towards the revenue and the governmental necessities of the State. Men in that category who received the benefit from the State institutions quite justifiably should pay land tax, and such a person, compared with the owners of estates smaller or larger, was very lightly treated to-day, as he had shown in the debate on the Address in Reply. Estates with an unimproved value of between £1,000 and £5,000 were in a class which received more consideration comparatively than estates with an unimproved value of more than £5,000 and less than £1,000. Estates of an unimproved value of less than £1,000 might reasonably expect more reasonable consideration than estates with a value of between £1,000 and £5,000. On the other hand, estates between £1,000 and £5,000 in unimproved value were exempt from the operation of the Federal land tax, which the estates of about £5,000 unimproved value had to bear. He brought that aspect of the question under the notice of the Treasurer in the hope that it would be equitably dealt with. They had been assured by hon. members opposite that the land and income tax was always passed on. How could that contention be reconciled with the assertion by the hon. member for Oxley the other night that, owing to the burden of taxation on the community, the taxpayers were resorting to evasion and deception in putting in returns because the tax was so heavy? The hon. member stated that they were resorting to evasion and deception and endeavouring to foist upon the Commissioner untrue returns. If they were doing that in the commercial world, what became of the contention of hon. members opposite that these taxes were always passed on?

Mr. FLETCHER: The pastoralists pay 52 per cent. of the taxation, and they cannot pass it on.

Mr. FERRICKS: They had passed it on. The pastoral industry during the past five years had made enough to enable them to pay well the 52 per cent. for years to come. If that was the position with regard to those people who were resorting to evasion and deception, why did they want to contend that it was the worker, the consumer, and the producer, and not the taxpayer, who suffered?

Mr. SIZER: Your party have always maintained that.

Mr. FERRICKS: He had always maintained it; but what became of the statements of hon. members opposite when they advanced contradictory assertions of that nature? He thought an effort should be made to bring about the unification of the Federal and State systems of taxation, because whatever burden of taxation there might be to-day was

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amplified and increased by there being dual taxation authorities, and the time had arrived when there should be unification between the States and Commonwealth in this regard.

Mr. DEACON (*Cunningham*): He would point out to the Treasurer that the income tax was really a very expensive tax to collect, as the hon. gentleman would know. There was the expense of valuation, and also expense in connection with appeals. To a certain extent, a double staff was required, and a lot of unnecessary work was done.

The TREASURER: I am introducing a Bill at the end of this week, or early next week, dealing with the carrying over of the average. That will be a very opportune time to discuss that question. The Bill will go through this session.

Mr. DEACON: How will it affect the land tax?

The TREASURER: You might discuss it then.

Mr. DEACON: He would defer his remarks till the Bill came on.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): He desired to thank the Treasurer and the officials of the Income Tax Office for what had been done for the industrial co-operative societies in the State. They had tried for many years to get a concession from the income tax authorities, but had been unable to get it until the Treasurer had given it to them. It meant a big thing to the people who were endeavouring to develop the co-operative movement in Queensland. The Opposition gave the department no credit for giving a percentage of the income tax to the co-operative societies in connection with their trading operations. The action of the Government was to be commended. The Federal Government, in addition to taxing these societies, were sending round to all the societies asking them to submit lists of the names of their shareholders, so that they might bill them a second time for the income tax which they had already taken from them on bonuses and dividends which they had received. That showed the difference between the Labour Government and the National Government, as represented by hon. members opposite and their friends in the Federal House. Yet they found that the champion of the co-operative movement—the hon. member for Drayton—never said a word, and the hon. member for Pittsworth got up and told hon. members on the Government side that they did not know what they were talking about. Hon. members opposite would give the department credit for nothing. The hon. member for Drayton spoke about a man holding land on the Downs valued at £4,300. A farm of 240 acres was a living area on the Downs. That would give any man a good living, and bring him an income of from £500 to £700 a year in an ordinary season. That meant that the friend of the hon. member for Drayton, with his 4,300 acres, was taking the place of seventeen men. With the minimum rate of £500 for each man, his income would be £8,500. What would his land tax come to on that income? The land tax on £4,300 would be, roughly, £80, which would be deducted from the £8,500 income. He would not have to pay it at all, because he would deduct it from his income. If the land was worth £4,300 now, according to the Statement of the hon. member for Drayton, it was originally worth £5,300, because the hon. member said it had depre-

ciated £1,000, which meant that that man was practically keeping off the land twenty-five persons who could be working the land and making a living on it. On behalf of the co-operative movement, he wanted to thank the Treasurer and the department for what they had done for co-operative and trading societies.

Mr. BRAND (*Burrum*): It cost the State something like £51,000 to run the Income Tax Office, and possibly it took a similar amount to run the Federal office in Brisbane. If the dual control was done away with, and the Federal and State land and income taxes were worked from one office, it would save the taxpayers of Queensland £50,000.

The TREASURER: That will be dealt with at the Premiers' Conference.

Mr. BRAND: He hoped that the Premier and the Treasurer would do their utmost to try and bring about that arrangement. He understood that Western Australia already operated its land and income taxes from one office. The primary producers in the State would be pleased if the proposed arrangement was brought about in Queensland. He did not suppose there was any-

[10 p.m.] thing more worrying to the primary producers than the fact that they had to send in two returns for the one income. The hon. member for Pittsworth referred to land values, and all farmers who had had anything to do with land valuers knew that they were very unsatisfactory.

The TREASURER: Would you support a Bill to provide for uniform valuations for the Commonwealth and State purposes?

Mr. BRAND: He would support a Bill whereby the local authority values would be taken for land tax purposes. Seeing that local authorities every few years had to get competent land valuers to value their land, he could see no reason why the Land Tax Department could not accept the values of the local authorities. In the vote there was an amount of £2,080 for land valuers, and, if the Treasurer would authorise the Commissioner to accept the local authority valuations, he could very easily save that amount.

The TREASURER: I am very sorry I cannot accept your proposition.

Mr. BRAND: They knew the Treasurer was not going to reduce expenses if he could possibly assist the primary producers by doing so. The Treasurer would admit that, as far as possible, the department were taking the local authority valuations to-day.

The TREASURER: As far as they are reasonable.

Mr. BRAND: In Queensland to-day, due to the high taxation levied on the people, the value of land had been reduced very considerably. He was pleased to note that the Treasurer had intimated that he was at last going to bring about the averaging system.

The TREASURER: I said I was going to introduce a Bill to give relief.

Mr. BRAND: He understood the system that the Treasurer proposed to adopt was to allow for losses. He would like to refer to section 46 of the Land Tax Act, which the Government were so prone to talk about, and in which provision was made for granting relief to a taxpayer in the case of hardship. That section read—

"In any case where it was shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that

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a taxpayer liable to pay land tax has become insolvent, or has suffered such a loss that the exaction of the full amount of tax will entail serious hardship, or that, by reason of drought or adverse seasons or other adverse conditions, the returns from the land have been seriously impaired, the Commissioner may release such taxpayer wholly or in part from his liability, and the Commissioner may make such entries and alterations in the assessment as are necessary for that purpose."

That was a very good section, but his experience in that connection had not been altogether satisfactory. Hon. members would realise that in the sugar areas in his district in 1919 and 1920 there had been very serious losses, and it would be a great hardship, indeed, if the sugar-growers were compelled to pay land tax. Certainly, they would not have to pay income tax, as their losses during those two years had been very material. If any class of people should be entitled to the benefit of the provisions of section 46 of the Act, it was those people, as they had just come through a period of two years' drought. Recently he made application under that section for relief in regard to the return which he sent in for land which he owned at midnight on 30th June last, and the Commissioner informed him that he could not treat the matter just now, but that he would wait until his income tax was filed for the year ending 30th June, 1922. He pointed out that his income tax returns for both 1920 and 1921 showed conclusively that he had had serious losses. Possibly, in the course of six weeks or two months, he would be asked to pay his land tax, as the Commissioner would not consider the granting of relief until next year. That would be of little value to him or anyone else. If that section was meant to benefit anyone, it was meant to give immediate relief, and he hoped the Treasurer would issue instructions that section 46 should be interpreted more liberally than had been the case up to the present. Section 7 of the Income Tax Act provided that agriculturists could deduct the amount of their land tax from their income tax payments. Speaking on that matter last year, as reported on page 25 of "Hansard," volume cxxxvi, the Premier said—

"As far as the operation of the land tax is concerned, it does not apply to the small working farmers.

"Mr. J. H. C. Roberts: Of course it does.

"The PREMIER: It does not. That is the kind of misrepresentation the Labour party continually has to put up with. There is an exemption to start with, and then with regard to the land tax applying to agriculturists, no matter how big their farms are, they can take the full amount of land tax they paid out of the income tax payable by them."

He quite realised that all taxpayers who made an application under section 7 of the Income Tax Act would get relief from that portion of the land tax. Many farmers did not know that the provision existed and did not make application, the result being that they did not obtain the relief they should. It would be a kindly action for the Treasurer to instruct the Commissioner to give that relief, whether an application was made or not. The Commissioner could very easily do it.

Mr. FRY (*Kwiltpa*): He had turned up the "Votes and Proceedings" for 8th Janu-

ary, 1920, and found that he had asked the Treasurer the following question:—

"Speaking in the Federal Parliament on 23rd October, 1919, Mr. Watt, Federal Treasurer, stated that he had offered to collect the States' income tax for an amount not exceeding one-third of the present cost to the States. Why did not the Government of Queensland agree to the proposal?"

The reply was—

"The Federal Treasurer's proposal was made to the States as a whole at a joint conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, but was not accepted. At the same Conference one of the States offered to collect the whole of the taxes at half what it was then costing."

It was just as well for them to know that this offer had been made, and turned down by this Government.

The TREASURER: They appointed a special Commissioner since that time to inquire into it, and that report is still under consideration.

Mr. FRY: If the Commonwealth Government could collect our taxation for an amount not exceeding one-third of the present cost, it was a matter for serious consideration. If other proposals made at those conferences were treated in the same manner as this had been, the conferences should be extended so as to include leaders of Oppositions. The House would then know the true position, and it would not be necessary to have it dragged out by some private member who accidentally heard something about it.

The matter raised by the hon. member for South Brisbane was worthy of a statement from the Treasurer in order that the people would know exactly how they stood. They could see at that time it was question of one party against another. It might have been considered good tactics at that time, but he questioned whether it was a wise policy to shelve any proposition coming from the Commonwealth Treasury which was going to make for the cheaper administration of the affairs of the State. He would resist, in every direction he considered wise, any attempt of the Commonwealth to take away from the State any more of its rights, unless the State benefited materially. The State had given to the Commonwealth rights which it would be better off if it now possessed. He questioned whether the handing over of the State Savings Bank was a wise action.

Mr. PEASE: The Commonwealth took millions of our money in loans. That did not stifle industry, did it?

Mr. FRY: The taxation placed on industry had stifled it, and the hon. member for Herbert had not raised his voice against that sort of thing. Taxation might be imposed to a much greater extent. The new objective of the Government party was communism, and the next step in the progress of communism was to tax, and tax, and tax again. Apparently this was a road to the Soviet system of government. If it were, it was useless raising their voice against the excessive taxation of the people, because they would be told it was the policy of the Government, as laid down by the interstate conference of the Australian Labour party, and must be carried out. They also would be told that taxation was one of the means by which this state of affairs would be brought about; and probably they would be

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told that the Government had the sanction of the people of the State because they had received the directions of the All-Australia Labour Conference.

Mr. GLEDSON: We will call that "Fry's optical illusion." (Laughter.)

Mr. FRY: They could call it anything they liked. Unfortunately for the hon. gentleman who had interjected, his Premier had told them, as reported in the "Daily Standard," that these were communistic doctrines, and asked whether he had to swallow them without a struggle. If they carried out that policy, there would be no industry to tax; they would all be State enterprises, which were losing concerns.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman is not in order in discussing State enterprises on the vote "Land and Income Tax."

Mr. FRY: He wanted to show that all the losses incurred through these communistic or socialistic schemes would have to be made up by taxation of the people. Where was the taxation to come from? There was another view they had to take of it—the fear which would manifest itself in the community through State enterprises starting in opposition to private enterprise, and depriving the State of taxation which might be drawn from many sources. It was only fair to the Committee and the country that the Premier should make a straight-out statement as to the likely effect of the new objective on taxation. He believed that the man on the land was being taxed far too much, and they should do all they possibly could to assist him. They should even go so far as to give him the freehold of some of their 400,000,000 acres of land, for by cultivating some of the land which was now covered with prickly-pear they would encourage production and be able to raise some revenue without undue taxation. Every encouragement should be given to the man who was the backbone of the country; every encouragement should be given to men to go on the land and become producers. The man in the city depended on the man on the land for his foodstuffs, for his raw material to manufacture in his factories. It must be apparent that, if a certain amount of money was required for development in the country, and, if a portion was taken away, the producer who was trying to do his best on the land was handicapped and the community generally suffered. The Treasurer should make some clear statement about his attitude on the communistic objective of the Australian Labour party.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): They had heard a good deal on every vote about the communistic objective. The Government's policy was clearly defined; they were part of the Australian Labour party. (Opposition interruption.) He had only a few minutes, but he wanted to put the Committee right on the matter of having one tax-collecting authority. He would quote from the report of the proceedings of the Premiers' Conference of 1920. He (Mr. Fihelly) said—

"In 1918, Mr. Watt said that the Commonwealth could collect the State taxes for about one-half of what the collection cost the States; in January, 1919, he said that he could guarantee that the cost would not exceed the present cost, and, later in the same month, he said that the Commonwealth could collect the

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taxes for one-third of what it cost the States to do so."

Mr. Watt was speaking loosely. An expression of opinion on behalf of the Government followed:—

"I would gladly allow the Commonwealth to collect our taxation if they would do it for one-third of what we pay."

Later on, Mr. Hughes said—

"They are prepared, also, to agree to the establishment of one collecting authority, provided that the States have representation on it. What is your attitude to that proposal, Mr. Fihelly?"

And he replied—

"I accept without reservation the Commonwealth proposal to do the work that we are doing for one-third of the cost." That was and that had been their attitude. A Royal Commission had been appointed to consider the whole question of taxation, but the solution would not be found in having one collecting authority; it would be found only in a Federal convention to readjust, perhaps, the boundaries of the Commonwealth, to review State and Federal powers, to arrange one roll for local authorities, State and Federal departments, one stamp authority, one taxation authority, and so forth. It might be found that it would be a good thing for the State to have income tax and the Commonwealth to have land tax, or vice versa, but at present they could not do much. A slight saving could be effected by having one taxing authority, and they could do that by having one form, which they were recommending to the Commonwealth at the present time.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): It seemed to him that the Government had never made much of an attempt to ascertain whether one taxing authority would be better than the present system or not. It seemed to him that under present methods it was quite possible for a man to be taxed when he made practically nothing out of his farm. He could give them cases where that had happened—he was a case himself. He was paying tax, although he was getting practically nothing out of that land.

The PREMIER: You get £500 here.

Mr. WARREN: He was getting that from the Government. It was time the Government went into the matter in a businesslike manner. Not only should they have one tax-collecting authority, but they should also have a different method of taxation. Take the sugar-cane grower. He had all his work in one year and the expenses of that year did not go as a set-off against the profits of the following year. That was manifestly unfair.

At 10.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 306, I shall 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.

The Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS.

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

"That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended for the remainder of this session as would otherwise preclude the

receiving of resolutions from the Committees of Supply and Ways and Means on the same day on which they shall have passed in those Committees, and also the passing of Bills through all their stages in one day.”—

said: This is the motion that is invariably carried towards the termination of the session.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): We have only been in session about ten weeks and no valid reason has been given why this House should rise at the time that the Premier proposes that it shall. If it is necessary for the Premier to go away to the Premier's Conference, we can adjourn for the time he is away, and then we can reassemble and carry out the business that we are supposed to be assembled to do. My objection to racing Bills through in one day is that we see in the Government organ that very important legislation is to be introduced in this Chamber. The masters of the Government have decided that legislation shall be introduced notice of which has not been given to this Chamber.

The PREMIER: I would recommend the hon. member not to take any notice of newspaper rumours.

Mr. VOWLES: We will wait and see, and other legislation of which we have not been given notice will probably be introduced in the next few days, and as we know nothing of its details we shall probably find that it is loaded. We want to give that consideration to Bills that should be given to them. We have always objected to Bills being thrust upon us. I have a lively recollection of the session when the Government came into power where business was heaped upon us and we were never given an opportunity of discussing it. Here we have other legislation given to us in the last week of the session, and we are not given an opportunity of perusing it or discussing it. Parliament is supposed to be a deliberative chamber, and we are supposed to give very weighty and mature consideration to all measures.

The PREMIER: I would suggest to the hon. member that he should not waste so much time on the Estimates, and that he should get on with the legislation.

Mr. VOWLES: We are not wasting time. We are getting down to certain Estimates that we particularly want to discuss, though I have no doubt we will be up against a stone wall before many days are past, to prevent us reaching these Estimates. We cannot give the necessary attention to measures if they are going to be rushed through in the way that is proposed. I protest against the motion.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): I wish to protest against this motion being carried, seeing we have not been in session very long. Since I have been in the House I do not recollect the House meeting in August and rising at the end of October. The Premier has to attend the Premier's Conference in Melbourne, but surely he can do what the Premier of Western Australia has done, and adjourn the House long enough to enable him to attend to the conference and return to carry out the business that the country expects him to carry out.

The PREMIER: You always object to sitting till Christmas time.

Mr. TAYLOR: That is so; but we should have been called together earlier than

August. We do not know what Bills are going to be brought before us. We shall be receiving the Bill from the Legislative Council to enable hon. members to draw their salary whilst contesting Federal seats. I suppose that is one measure we shall be asked to put through in one day. We might also be asked to put through the Legislative Council Abolition Bill in one day, although the Government have had six years in which to pass that Bill. I do not think this motion should be carried. Legislation affects the whole State, and it requires to be considered in a proper way. I would like to know whether the Premier recollects the Estimates ever having taken less than the allotted time.

The PREMIER: Yes. I can give you more than one instance—1909, for one.

Mr. TAYLOR: I think the Premier will find that the full time allowed under the Standing Orders has always been taken. I protest against this motion being carried.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The only reason given by the Premier for this motion is that he desires to attend the Premier's conference. I think the House would have been quite content to allow the hon. gentleman to move the adjournment of the House for a week or fortnight, and then to come back and do the business that we are called upon to do. I do not think hon. members receiving £500 should only be asked to do twelve weeks' work. I want to protest against the motion. There is a great deal of urgent legislation that requires to be put through. The Government are going into recess within a week, and probably we shall not meet again until next August. We have only sat for twelve weeks; but the Premier wants to get into recess. With a majority of one, the Premier is on pins and needles while the House is sitting. I do not suppose he has had one good night's sleep during the period we have been sitting. (Government laughter.) The power possessed by the rank and file of the Government is enormous; they can get almost anything they like for their electorates.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must confine himself to the amendment.

Mr. MORGAN: That is the reason why the Government want to adjourn. The Government want to retain office; and the moment they get into recess the Premier will be able to say to any man who is likely to come over to this side, "We can defy you until we meet the House again."

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion is one for the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. MORGAN: I object to the suspension of the Standing Orders, the excuse for which is that the Premier wants to attend the Premier's conference in Melbourne.

Mr. KIRWAN: Why don't you give him a "pair"?

Mr. MORGAN: That is only an excuse. If we had offered him a "pair," it would not have made any difference. The Premier could adjourn the House for the period of the conference. I hope the resolution will not be carried.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): The proposal of the Premier to adjourn the House is against the best interests of the people of Queensland. When the Government first came into office they adopted similar tactics to those they are adopting now, and put through Bills very hurriedly. The result of that hasty legislation has proved very

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disastrous to the State. Only a few months ago, when I was negotiating with the Premier with reference to the export of coal from Central Queensland, the hon. gentleman said that there had been too much haste in connection with legislation and administration in the past; yet he now brings forward a motion to enable Bills to be put through all their stages in one day. We are facing the gravest financial position we have ever had in the State. Nothing is being done to meet the difficulties ahead, and we are going into recess without anything being done to satisfactorily solve the unemployment problem. The Government are failing in their duty.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): I wish to protest against this motion going through. As there will very likely be a division on the motion, I wish to make my position quite clear. The hon. member for Bowen has, unfortunately, a serious illness in his family, and I have agreed to allow him to go away; therefore, I shall not be able to exercise my vote in division. I think that this undue haste in rushing legislation through the House does not tend to good legislation. We have the right, as an Opposition, to discuss measures fully, in order that legislation may be passed in the best interests of the people. The House has degenerated. We might as well be without Parliament altogether, because Bills are pushed through without amendments being accepted, and sent to the other Chamber, and returned without amendment. By allowing this motion to go through, we shall not be fulfilling the functions we are called upon to exercise.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): I should not be doing my duty if I did not protest against this motion going through. The Government are desperately anxious to get into recess. It is stated by Government members that the session will be completed by Friday week. It is ridiculous that seventy-two members of Parliament should be paid for merely sitting in Parliament for a short period of ten or eleven weeks. So far as legislation is concerned, they are not earning their money. We know perfectly well that there is a great entertainment coming on down South at an early date, and, had the Premier desired to visit that entertainment in an official capacity, all he need to have done was to have adjourned the House for a week or ten days and there would have been no opposition offered on this side. There are many important matters that require to be discussed at the present time. I moved a motion in this House recently with regard to the convention that is likely to take place, and that motion has not been debated. It is because the House is going into recess that private member's day has been done away with.

The SPEAKER: Order! The motion before the House is the suspension of the Standing Orders.

Mr. KERR: The Government are tottering, and they would go to any length to hold their positions for another six or nine months. We never know the day, unfortunately, when it may be that one of their members will get ill and away goes their majority of one.

The PREMIER: Is that what you are waiting for?

Mr. KERR: I do not desire the illness of any hon. member of this House, but I would not object to something unforeseen happening to take away their large majority of one.

[*Mr. Fletcher.*

(Laughter.) I sincerely trust the Premier will reconsider this matter and adjourn the House to allow of his attending the Premier's Conference.

Question—Suspension of the Standing Orders (*Mr. Theodore's motion*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
" Brennan	" Land
" Bulcock	" Lacombe
" Conroy	" McCormack
" Cooper, F. A.	" Mullan
" Cooper, W.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Pease
" Dash	" Pollock
" Ferricks	" Riordan
" Fihelly	" Ryan
" Foley	" Smith
" Forde	" Stopford
" Gilday	" Theodore
" Gillies	" Weir
" Gledson	" Wellington
" Hartley	" Wilson
" Huxham	" Winstanley
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Forde and	Mr. Gledson.

NOES, 32.

Mr. Appel	Mr. Kerr
" Barnes, G. P.	" King
" Barnes, W. H.	" Logan
" Bebbington	" Macgregor
" Bell	" Maxwell
" Brand	" Moore
" Cattermull	" Morgan
" Clayton	" Nott
" Corser	" Petrie
" Costello	" Roberts, J. H. C.
" Deacon	" Roberts, T. R.
" Edwards	" Sizer
" Elphinstone	" Swayne
" Fletcher	" Taylor
" Fry	" Yowles
" Jones	" Warren
<i>Tellers:</i> Mr. Bell and	Mr. Kerr.

Resolved in the affirmative.

BILLS RETURNED FROM COUNCIL.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt, from the Council, of messages returning the following Bills, without amendment:—

Government Inscribed Stock Act Amendment Bill.

City of South Brisbane Loan Acts Amendment Bill.

Contractors' and Workmen's Lien Act Amendment Bill.

Water Authorities Act Amendment Bill.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

FIRST READING.

On the motion of the ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Hon. J. Mullan, *Flinders*), this Bill, received by message from the Council, was read a first time.

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

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the House do now adjourn. The business to-morrow will be Supply. The leader of the Opposition has given notice of his intention to move a motion of want of confidence, which, in the existing circumstances, the Government do not feel disposed to treat as a serious challenge. Therefore, an opportunity will be afforded the hon. member, if he so desires, of moving his motion after half-past 10 o'clock to-morrow night. (Loud Government laughter.)

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 11 p.m.