

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

THURSDAY, 20 OCTOBER 1921

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

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FOURTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

THE TREASURER.

LAND AND INCOME TAX.

Question stated—

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

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*): Last year he had prophesied that the taxation returns would show an increase, and he had been proved to be correct, because the increase had been £300,000. There had been a slight reduction in regard to stamp duty, but the income tax had increased by £400,000. Queensland was not getting a fair deal from the Commonwealth in regard to its sources of taxation. The State was something like £1,000,000 per annum worse off than if it had retained the power to levy customs and excise duty. In proportion it had received a great deal more under the Braddon clause of the Australian Constitution than it had been receiving since that clause had been cancelled in the year 1910. Under the Australian Constitution the following matters were vested exclusively in the Federal Government, either by specific enactment or by transfer of the powers from the State:—

“Indirect taxation by customs and excise; bounties; defence; posts, telegraphs, and telephones; quarantine; lighthouses, etc.; meteorological; census; patents, etc.; naturalisation; invalid and old age pensions.”

The powers exercisable by both Federal and State Governments included—

“Direct taxation; indirect taxation other than by customs and excise; statistics; banking; insurance; bankruptcy and insolvency; marriage and divorce; immigration; railways and tramways; industrial arbitration; justice; Government loans.”

Among the matters which were reserved for the States were—

“Education; mining; agriculture; rabbits; water supply and sewerage; harbours and rivers; roads and bridges; medical; health; lunacy and charitable; museums and public institutions; gaols; police.”

So that the State clearly had to meet commitments in various channels from which there was no reproductive return. When they came to consider the question they found that it was understood that only in great emergency would the Commonwealth enter the field of direct taxation. That was borne out by the dictum of Chief Judge Marshall, of the United States Supreme Court—

“The power to tax involves the power to destroy, and the power to destroy may defeat and render useless the power to create.”

There was no doubt that the Commonwealth—by entering the field of direct taxation by imposing land tax, income tax, an entertainments tax, and other forms of tax—had stopped the industries of Queensland from going ahead as they ought, and lessened

the power to create. The Imperial Government might enforce direct taxation on the people of Australia in great emergency, although wiser counsels had directed that they should not do so; but the Commonwealth Government, although under a somewhat similar constitution, had overstepped the mark, and inflicted on the people of the State direct taxation even greater than the State itself was extracting. It was true that in emergency the Commonwealth might do that, and might say that the commitments in regard to the war were such that it had to impose direct taxation; but the land tax, for instance, was imposed by the Commonwealth before there was any national emergency. Queensland had lost approximately £1,000,000 per annum by not getting together a Committee of the House to consider the question, and the Treasurer had said that they might possibly lose even 25s. per capita payment.

The TREASURER: I said the matter was under discussion at the last Premiers' Conference.

Mr. KERR: They should not go into recess until the question was discussed. To show that the Commonwealth were infringing on State rights by imposing direct taxation, he wished to quote from the “Commonwealth Year Book”—

“The question of the imposition by the Commonwealth Parliament of direct taxes such as land and income taxes is one which has been the subject of considerable discussion, and the opinion has been expressed that the intention of the framers of the Constitution was that of restricting the powers of taxation of the Commonwealth to the imposition of customs and excise duties except in case of great national peril.”

As he had pointed out already, the question arose in 1910 before the war—before there was any national peril. In “The Coming Commonwealth,” Sir Robert Garran said—

“It is unlikely that, except in great emergencies, the Federal Government need resort to other modes of taxation; but, since emergencies may happen, its powers of direct and indirect taxation ought to be unlimited.”

There was no doubt that the Commonwealth had entered the State's sphere of action, and was taking a good deal of the taxation revenue that should be coming to the State. The State still had to maintain all the charitable institutions, with the exception of the invalid and old-age pensions; but it had been deprived of a legitimate source of revenue by the Commonwealth invading its domain of taxation. He mentioned the matter because a Premiers' Conference was shortly to be held. In Western Australia the matter had been considered by Parliament. A full day's discussion was allowed by the Premier, and, as a result of the discussion, some of the State officials were attached to the Parliamentary Committee that was appointed and was now going into this matter.

The PREMIER: I am quite willing to allow you to have a full day's discussion here.

Mr. KERR: They had already dealt with it in Western Australia. It had also been considered by the Legislative Assembly in South Australia, and was coming before the House in Tasmania; but an opportunity had not been given in Queensland. However, he

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accepted the assurance of the Premier that an opportunity would be given.

The PREMIER: No. I will give you an opportunity to discuss it as fully as you like.

Mr. KERR: He did not desire to discuss the matter at any length. In 1910 the Braddon clause of the Australian Constitution was superseded by the payment of 25s. per capita to the States.

Mr. FERRICKS: Is it a fact that you are a candidate for the Federal Convention?

Mr. KERR: He would not be at all surprised. Considering that an Act had already been introduced providing that protection should be given to likely Federal candidates, such as the hon. member for Rockhampton, one might expect anything; but he was not on the Government side and was not likely to get legislation to meet his particular circumstances. Under the Braddon clause the Commonwealth Government were entitled to retain 25 per cent. of the revenue from Customs and Excise. In 1902 the Commonwealth retained 14.7 per cent.; and in 1909, 25 per cent. In 1910 the 25s. per head payment superseded the Braddon clause, and in 1911 the total revenue from Customs and Excise was £12,000,000, and the Commonwealth retained 55.7 per cent. instead of the 25 per cent. they would have been entitled to under the Braddon clause, so that the State lost the difference between the 25 per cent. and the 55.7 per cent. of the Customs and Excise revenue collected. In 1915 the Customs and Excise revenue had increased to £14,000,000, and the Commonwealth retained 55.8 per cent., the State again losing the difference between the two schemes. In 1919 the Customs and Excise revenue went up to £17,000,000, and was still going up year after year; and the Commonwealth retained 62.1 per cent. The 25s. per capita was a much lesser sum than 25 per cent. of the Customs and Excise. Those were things in regard to taxation that the State of Queensland had to consider seriously. Recently, a Commission had been appointed by the Federal Government to consider the question of the Commonwealth and State spheres of taxation, and this matter had not come before that Commission. The wings of unification or centralisation which existed at the present time had to be clipped. He was not out for the State's isolation, nor for the loss of State rights.

The TREASURER: Do you say that the per capita payments have never been discussed?

Mr. KERR: They were not discussed by the recent Commission on taxation.

The TREASURER: I will give you a copy of it.

Mr. KERR: He had a copy, and he made it his business to read those matters. It was a matter that required a good deal of consideration by the State, and he was sorry that the three most important States had not seen fit to take some action. New South Wales and Victoria were States that benefited by the fiscal policy, but in Queensland this at present was not the case. Western Australia, South Australia, Tasmania, and Queensland had to fight in this connection; already they were sending part of this 25s. per head to Western Australia. These were things which the States could not sit quietly under always, without complaint.

The TREASURER: The last Premiers' Conference threatened to take it off altogether.

[Mr. Kerr.]

Mr. KERR: It was time that the States mostly concerned, and particularly Queensland, took action together to prevent the Commonwealth withholding the 25s. per capita payment. Further, on a consumption basis, we are entitled to more than 25s. per head of population. The Premier should adjourn the House for a week while he and his colleagues went down to the forthcoming conference.

He (Mr. Kerr) wanted to say a few words with regard to the system of taxing profits. They knew that the exorbitant taxation on the various industries was merely a tax on paper profits, and that business men in Queensland had to get overdrafts to pay their income tax. There were hon. members in that Chamber who had already had to raise overdrafts to pay their income tax. He wished to quote from an address by Mr. J. P. Macfarlane to the Brisbane Chamber of Commerce recently. That gentleman, who was an authority on the subject of income tax, said—

"How are we attempting to carry this almost overwhelming load of expenditure? Are we working from morn till night in the fields, in the factories, and on the seas? No! We are paralysing new enterprises with inhibiting legislation and crude taxation schemes, making losses on our railways, discouraging the farmers, producers, and factory owners with harassing enactments, and searing capital."

Mr. Macfarlane also said—

"First, manufacturers and all who seek to extend enterprises employing labour should be encouraged to devote a percentage of their profits by way of capital for such a worthy object. A substantial measure of income tax relief should be granted them, so that capital will be forthcoming from those who are competent to conduct industry. Secondly, I consider that similar direct encouragement should be given to employers who establish reserves in order to strengthen and stabilise their businesses."

There were many firms in Brisbane to-day who were unable to stabilise their businesses, owing to the fact that income tax was imposed to such an enormous extent. Turning to another phase of the question, a return which had been made by the Attorney-General, showing the amount of capital which had come into the State recently, had a great bearing on the matter. They knew that, if they had reserves and put those reserves into business as new capital, their income tax was going to come down, profits being taxed on the return from capital invested. There was no new money coming into the State. They all knew that, if they issued a prospectus for a company with a capital of £1,000,000 in £1 shares, all that was required under the Companies Act was that there should be seven shareholders who need only take one share each. If they looked at the money put into business ventures in Queensland to-day, they would see that for every £100,000 authorised capital possibly only £10,000 had been subscribed. Instead of new capital coming into the State it had been driven out. He had already put some of those proposals before the Premier, and he sincerely hoped that the question of taxation in Queensland would be gone into very closely and reduced. He gave an avenue whereby taxation might be reduced a little bit; of course, it would be at the expense of the Commonwealth, but it was justifiable.

At 11.20 a.m.,

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

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): Notwithstanding the Treasurer's hilarity, he would suggest that the hon. member read the speeches of the hon. member for Enoggera when he had a few minutes to spare.

The TREASURER: Why, you are laughing yourself.

Mr. TAYLOR: He was quite satisfied the hon. gentleman would find those speeches of such an educational character that they would help him to improve the administration of the Treasury Department. The Treasurer, of course, carried more responsibility than any member of the Cabinet, not excepting the Premier himself, with regard to the finances of Queensland; and it was not a right thing that the Treasurer should wait until he received reports from other Ministers as to what money was being expended. Instead of sitting in his office, he would do much better work if he went out and saw for himself how and where money was being expended. That the Government quite realised the fact that the taxation of incomes had absolutely reached its limit was evidenced by the fact that the Government had not introduced extra taxation this year. The Government realised, as had been pointed out years ago by the Opposition, that they were going too fast in the matter of expenditure, and that there was a limit to the taxation which the people could bear, and, when that limit was reached, industry was crippled, as was the case in Queensland to-day. The Income Tax Department had received practically the whole of the returns for the State for the year just ended. He did not know whether the Treasurer had taken the trouble to ask the Commissioner to let him have an approximate return of the incomes as supplied by income tax payers, so that he could compare the amount with the total for last year. He was not asking for assessments, because they took a long time to get through, but he felt satisfied that, if the Treasurer asked the Commissioner to give him an approximate return of the incomes for the past year, he would find that the revenue which he had anticipated from income tax would be very much reduced. That was his opinion, at any rate.

The TREASURER: We have to take a purely speculative estimate. We have not got the returns yet so far as they affect metals, wool, and meat.

Mr. TAYLOR: He quite understood that those returns were not available when the Treasurer delivered his Financial Statement, and, of course, the Treasurer could only make an estimate of what taxation he thought would be received. Now that they had reached October, he thought the hon. gentleman should have some idea of what amount of income tax he was going to receive. A lot of responsibility rested on the Treasurers, both in the Commonwealth and in the individual States, and particularly in Queensland. They had noticed figures in the Auditor-General's report which made any man consider what was the best way out of the difficulty. The best way out was not to increase taxation, but to encourage industries of all kinds.

The TREASURER: Either this week or next week I will introduce legislation to reduce taxation.

Mr. TAYLOR: He was very pleased to hear that the Treasurer proposed to reduce taxation, because it was time the taxation was reduced. It was time that the revenue-producing activities of the State should shoulder more of the burden required to carry out the activities of the State at the present time.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): In order to emphasise the attitude taken up by members of the Opposition, he stressed the fact that farmers and dairymen contributed largely to taxation generally.

The TREASURER: I told you just now that I would be introducing legislation in a few days' time to give general relief to farmers and dairymen.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He was very glad to hear that.

The TREASURER: You do not find the Commonwealth Government doing that.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He favoured anything that would give relief to farmers and would encourage the development of the agricultural industry. The hon. member for Toowoomba stressed the fact that the amount of taxation paid by dairy farmers was infinitesimal, and said that in the case of land tax it amounted to only 4 per cent. This was what the Commissioner of Taxes said on the subject—

"Farmers owning land valued at £1,230 and under, who paid tax, numbered 11,518, the amount of tax charged being £18,659, equal to 4.06 per cent. of the total tax charged on all lands."

Then they would find that the number of farmers who paid income tax was fairly small. The hon. member for Toowoomba talked about the men on the land having a good time, but those two facts contradicted his statement. If the farmers were doing as well as the hon. member for Toowoomba indicated, then the amount paid in land and income tax would have been greatly in excess of the amount shown in the return.

Mr. BRENNAN: They are better off than the industrialists.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The income tax returns showed that the employees who paid tax numbered 6,795, and the tax assessed last year amounted to £34,932, so that the employees paid 9.81 per cent. of the tax. So the statement of the hon. member for Toowoomba was not borne out.

Mr. PEASE: Only 563 dairy farmers paid tax last year.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The form prescribed made a deduction in the land tax for both Federal and State. Supposing the amount paid by farmers in connection with the land tax was only about 4 per cent. [11.30 a.m.] of the total, what ratio did the holders of land bear to the whole community? In 1920 the number engaged in agriculture and dairying was 26,921; so that they had only about 4 per cent. of the population engaged in that industry. The remarkable thing was that there was so little land under cultivation—only 1,018,444 acres. Whilst, on the average, the tax was not great, anyone who had lived amongst agriculturists and dairymen knew how exceedingly irritating was the rendering of taxation returns.

The TREASURER: They are irritating to everyone; but not nearly as irritating as the payment of the tax.

Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The persons engaged in farming and dairying and their employees last year numbered 62,728. It was worthy of note that the total value of the crops produced was £10,386,223. Evidently, those men were rendering the country great service, and it would be a worthy act on the part of the Government to make the taxation as easy as possible for them.

Question put and passed.

MARINE.

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

“That £74,103 be granted for ‘Marine.’”

Hon. members would see they had reduced the number of the staff by over twenty, and they were asking for £5,527 less than was voted last year. That was indicative of certain economies having been effected.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): His electorate was rather a peculiar one. It extended for 150 miles inland, and also about 15 or 20 miles out to sea; therefore this vote interested him. He was pleased to hear the Treasurer say that they had effected economies in this department; but he hoped those economies had not been effected at the expense of efficiency. Hon. members of the Opposition often urged against this Government that sufficient recognition was not given to professional skill. His electorate surrounded Mackay entirely, and Mackay could not exist without his electorate. The harbour-master at Mackay also filled the position of pilot and captain of the steamer “Relief.” He had control of all the shipping operations, the berthage out at the anchorage, the piloting vessels into a very difficult port, and, in the event of a shipping disaster, the control of rescue work, and all that sort of thing. It was a very responsible position, calling for its occupancy by a highly-skilled man. This officer received only £310 per annum, but the fireman on the steamer, who had only to shovel the coal, received £264 per annum. He did not say the fireman was getting too much, but there should be a greater difference of more than £54 per annum between his salary and that of the harbour-master, who was also captain of the “Relief” as well, who had to exercise skill and have initiative. That was a striking illustration of the tendency of the present Administration to discourage trained professional men.

On some islands along the coast a certain amount of grazing and agriculture was being carried on. On one island a very enterprising firm had gone in for sheep-raising and horsebreeding, and the work which those men were doing was adding to the prosperity of Queensland; but they were handicapped largely by the difficulty of communication with the mainland. More especially during the season from January to the end of April, when the small craft they possessed were heavily handicapped by the weather conditions, their chance of communicating with the mainland was not a good one. With a view to encouraging those who were producing on those islands, would the Treasurer make it possible for such steamers as the “Relief,” while tending the lighthouses, to land mails and supplies on those islands?

The TREASURER: I will have that matter looked into. Of course, we are all desirous of doing our best for those isolated men.

[Mr. G. P. Barnes.]

Mr. SWAYNE: He hoped that the matter would be considered, and that, if possible, steps would be taken to assist such men who were producing on the islands off the coast.

Mr. FERRICKS (*South Brisbane*): Not long ago the hon. member for Brisbane asked certain questions about the disappearance of the steamer “Canastota,” and on the same evening he (Mr. Ferricks) drew attention to the matter in debate. The Treasurer replied to the hon. member for Brisbane that there were regulations under the Navigation Act making it necessary that, before boats loaded with inflammable or dangerous cargo left port, they should be inspected by the shipping inspector, but that no application for inspection had been made on behalf of the agents to the Marine Department, and the inspector was not aware that an inflammable cargo, benzine, was being reloaded into the ship. He also said that, in view of those aspects of the case, he had approved of a recommendation by the Marine Board that legal proceedings be taken. It would be remembered that a cargo of about 20,000 cases of benzine, which had been damaged or crudely manufactured, was reloaded in Brisbane, and that the members of the Waterside Workers’ Union, who were loading it, or were endeavouring to get out some pipes, were overcome by the fumes. The secretary of the union, Mr. Dawson, in company with the shipping agents’ representatives, made an inspection of the hold, and they could not tolerate the atmosphere for more than a few minutes. The unanimous offer of 3d. an hour extra was made to the men to get them to face the risk of continuing the work, but they quite rightly declined the alluring inducement, with the result that the vessel left Brisbane—he would not say that she was allowed to leave Brisbane—without any request for a permit, and without any inspection. She proceeded to Newcastle and reloaded more benzine, and on 30th June last she left Port Jackson, and had never been heard of since. It was a scandalous state of affairs that such a catastrophe could be brought about, and he was quite safe in saying that many men in St. Helena had committed crimes of a less serious nature than the offence committed in the case of the “Canastota,” for not only were precautions necessary in the interests of common safety disregarded, but authority also was absolutely flouted. It seemed to him that a greater punishment than any nominal fine of £50 or £100, or any fine at all, should be meted out to whoever was responsible. He was not aware, since he had not seen the papers on the matter, whether it was proposed to bring the responsible persons to book, but he wanted to impress on the Treasurer, on the department, and on the Committee, the seriousness of allowing the possibility of such a huge sacrifice occurring again owing to the greed of commercialism generally and the shipping agents in the case in particular. The means preliminary to bringing the people responsible to book would be the institution of an inquiry on broad lines, so that the whole facts might receive due publicity and the responsibility for the crime be sheeted home. There had been a silence almost unholy in regard to the occurrence, and, notwithstanding that it was dated some three or four months ago, hardly a word appeared in the public Press with reference to it. The dangers of a seafaring life were grave and great at all times, but they were immensely

graver and greater when it was lived under conditions of gross carelessness, if nothing worse. He wanted the Treasurer to assure the Committee, if he was in a position to do so on short notice, that a full inquiry would be made. It seemed to him that there must have been something wrong with the containers of the raw or half-raw benzine, or possibly the strength of the spirit exuded through the containers themselves. At any rate, the fumes were such that it was impossible for men to do ordinary cargo work in the hold, and a repetition of the experience here occurred at Newcastle. A crew of forty-nine men went to their doom owing to gross carelessness, or because of a crime on the part of some people committed in their desire for profits. Particularly sad cases in connection with the disappearance of the men had been repeated to the chairman and to him, and to others interested, inasmuch as two of them of eighteen or nineteen years of age—almost boys—had planned a certain venture in a small business proposition when they returned to their mothers on the other side of the world. Those youths and the other forty-seven men were sent to their doom, presumably at scarcely a moment's notice, owing to the fumes from the benzine coming into contact with the ship's boilers, because no word had ever reached civilisation of what had happened to them, or the method of the ship's destruction. In the interests of the safety of the workers generally, and of seafaring men in particular, it was the duty of the department in this case to obtain publicity of all the facts surrounding it by the institution of a full and authoritative inquiry to endeavour to prevent a repetition of such a crime against the workers generally.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*libert*): There were one or two matters that he would like to bring under the notice of the Treasurer, and he was satisfied that the Treasurer would take the necessary action in connection therewith. He was very pleased that the operations in connection with improvements and the maintenance of improvements in the port of Brisbane were being carried out effectively. It was absolutely necessary that this should be done in view of the fact that Brisbane was the principal port of the State of Queensland. Unless these operations were continuous, silting would always take place, and with the larger vessels employed it was likewise necessary that not only should the depth be maintained but an increased width of the cuttings should be obtained. The electorate of Albert comprised within its boundaries a certain portion of Moreton Bay, and in that portion of the bay were islands with fertile soil which he was pleased to say were being occupied and settled by settlers engaged in the cultivation of fruit, and, consequently, there was a certain amount of traffic by vessels going to and from the markets carrying that produce. Of late years, owing particularly to the opening known as Jumpin Pin, considerable alterations were taking place in the channels in the south end of the bay; silting up was going on, and new channels were being opened. In many instances big changes took place suddenly. He wanted to draw the attention of the Treasurer to the fact that in that portion of the bay matters were not as they should be as to beacons and their maintenance. He regretted that there was a reduction of £2,000 in the vote for "Buoys, beacons, moorings, etc." In many instances, owing to the absence of those necessary marks, accidents took place.

The TREASURER: The channel down at your end of the bay is fairly well marked.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Unfortunately it was not at present.

At 11.45 a.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The TREASURER: The hon. gentleman knows the bay off by heart.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He ought to. Continual changes, however, were taking place in the channels, many beacons had fallen down owing to these changes, and the broken or decayed ends of the beacons were now in the channels, and they were always a source of danger to the class of boat that navigated that end of the bay. He was sure the Treasurer would take his remarks in good part.

The TREASURER: I am very glad to have your views because you know what you are talking about.

HON. J. G. APPEL: The expenditure would not be very large. He had noticed that the lower end of many of the new small beacons now consisted of old steel rails, which made them permanent, and that system should be continued. He thought the Treasurer should give directions that any fallen beacons should be replaced, more particularly because of the changes in the channels that were continually taking place. A few months ago, where there used to be a very good depth of water, to-day the channel was shallow. He not only referred to traders, but also to a very large section of the community who were able to own pleasure yachts. It might be said that the yachts were not traders and so much interest should not be taken in them; but they had to realise that a large amount of money was expended in the boat building trade, and for ship's chandlery, and other odds and ends required to furnish a boat, whether it was a trader or a pleasure boat.

Some of the amounts paid to the light-keepers were excessively small. In one instance they were graded from £35 per annum to £45 per annum. That was a small amount of remuneration to pay. He thought the Treasurer should give sympathetic consideration to that matter.

The TREASURER: At Cleveland a man has to walk a few yards and light a lamp.

HON. J. G. APPEL: In some instances a man had to go out into the channel. Take the case of Southport.

The TREASURER: These positions are much sought after. It is only a matter of lighting a lamp and blowing out a match.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That might be all right in a place like Cleveland, where an old officer had simply to light a lamp on the wharf or jetty; but in many instances the lights were out in the stream, or a stream had to be crossed, and weather conditions had to be taken into consideration.

The TREASURER: It might be very hard sometimes. If the hon. gentleman knows of any individual case of hardship he might let me know.

HON. J. G. APPEL: He would. He was satisfied that, if he did so, the Treasurer would give the matter sympathetic consideration. The Boat Passage, leading from inside the mouth of the Brisbane River into the bay, was largely used by small traders in the southern portion of the bay, and it had become very shallow, indeed. Some of the boats could only get across at half-flood tide

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or full flood. It was necessary in many instances for the small fruit vessels to proceed outside St. Helena and round by the main passage at the Pile Light to the Brisbane River. The expenditure required to deepen the Boat Passage would not be very large. It could be done by a small dredge. The only necessity was that continual attention should be given to this particular work. The passage was very well lighted. If some slight attention was given periodically, it would remove the cause, and consequently open up the passage to and fro to those small fruit boats, to whom delay meant a loss to the fruitgrowers. The island boat left on Wednesday in time for the market on Friday. He felt sure that the Treasurer would give the matter sympathetic consideration.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): This was a fairly comprehensive vote. There was a reduction of about £5,000 on last year's vote, for which, no doubt, sufficient reasons could be advanced. There were increases in salaries provided for. They could fairly congratulate themselves on the work being done in the river and port, which had been carried out for some time in a satisfactory manner. Vessels of large tonnage did not appear to have any trouble in negotiating the Brisbane River. When one remembered the small type of vessel that came up the Brisbane River fifteen or twenty years ago compared with the big vessels which came up to South Brisbane now, it was very clear that much excellent work had been done. It was work of a continuous nature which could not be allowed to drop if they wished to maintain the shipping facilities of the port.

He noticed that in the vote for "Explosives Magazines" there were three places—Gympie, Bundaberg, and Townsville—cut out. There had evidently been someone associated with the magazines at those places who had been paid £200 a year. Georgetown was also cut out. The Treasurer would be able to tell them why those places were cut out.

The TREASURER: They were unnecessary.

Mr. TAYLOR: He also wanted to say a few words about the trawler.

The TREASURER: That is not in this vote.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member will realise that the trawler is not connected with this vote.

Mr. TAYLOR: It is mentioned on page 62 of the Estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: I would remind the hon. member that an amount was voted for working expenses of the trawler last year, but there is no vote for this year.

Mr. TAYLOR: There was no vote for this year, and he wanted to know why there was nothing put down for it. (Laughter.) The Treasurer was fully seized with regard to the trouble the trawler had caused. It cost £32,000, and the Treasurer was offered £25,000 for it. He did not know whether the hon. gentleman had been able to negotiate the sale of the vessel. He hoped that it would not be very long before the trawler was sold. There had been a loss of £13,792 on it, and the prospective loss on the sale of it would bring the amount up to about £20,000. The vessel was now lying in the river, and interest was accumulating on the money paid for it. He hoped that, if the Treasurer could get an offer, even considerably less than he paid for it, he would let it go. The Opposition had told the Premier

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at the time arrangements were being made to buy the vessel that, if he were a wise man, he would offer the New South Wales Government £10,000 instead of taking delivery of the boat, and that it would be money in pocket. Events had proved that that was sound advice, and it was a pity that it was not adopted at the time.

Mr. GREEN (*Townsville*): In connection with the Marine Department, he wished to bring before the Committee two important matters, to which he hoped the Treasurer would give every consideration. They were important, not only to the State, but also to the Commonwealth, which should co-operate with the State in providing the funds required. The first matter was with reference to the Flinders Passage through the Great Barrier Reef, which cut off 200 or 300 miles of dangerous coast-line to boats coming from overseas to Queensland—oil boats and other ships from America amongst others. There were many openings in the Barrier Reef which were important, not only commercially, but from a defence standpoint, and therefore the Commonwealth should be linked up with the State in the matter. Other Powers probably knew more about these passages than Australia did from a naval point of view.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth naval standpoint is confined to Hobart and Sydney.

Mr. GREEN: Would the Treasurer be prepared to get into touch with the Commonwealth authorities, and see if they were prepared to mark those passages so that they could be made navigable, not only to commercial ships, but to war vessels in time of trouble?

The TREASURER: We offered them Thursday Island, but they preferred to go round to Singapore.

Mr. GREEN: He hoped the Treasurer would give a reply to his question. This would materially assist North Queensland by reducing the distance to the ports there, and it would stimulate the trade of the North. He recently had the privilege of calling at Thursday Island on one of the oversea boats, and he was surprised to find that vessels could not go into such a fine port, and one of such strategic value, after 6 o'clock at night; they had either to anchor outside or pass the port altogether. He thought the Treasurer would agree that that was a very important base for Queensland and the Commonwealth of Australia. Lord Kitchener, in his report on the defence of Australia, laid it down that Thursday Island was one of the first places to which troops should be rushed for the defence of Australia.

The TREASURER: The Commonwealth Government prefer Hobart.

Mr. GREEN: Never mind what the Commonwealth Government preferred. If that Government did not realise its responsibility, it was no reason why the State should shirk its responsibility. That excuse was raised too much in these days—that, because a past Government had done something, it was a justification for the present Government to do the same. He hoped that, if the Opposition got on to the Treasury benches, they would not be governed entirely by precedents, but that they would be prepared to carry out what they considered was necessary.

The TREASURER: Can you tell me how we could rush troops to Thursday Island?

Mr. GREEN: The Government could light the port and make it a commercial stronghold for Queensland. When he learned of the matter he got in touch with the Chamber of Commerce, which had provided him with a list of the boats that previously could use that port either by day or night without any tugs being required at all. That list included the "Tango Maru," "Aki Maru," "Nikko Maru," "Marella," "Montoro," "Kanowna," "Arafura," "St. Albans," "Eastern," "Victoria," "Changsha," "Taiyuan," "Douglas Mawson," "Tambar," and "Kalliatina." He asked that the port be developed for commercial purposes and made a stronghold of Queensland. He hoped the Treasurer would give serious consideration to the matter, and, if the Commonwealth refused to do its duty, then the Queensland Government should accept the responsibility.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Puddington*): Many of the matters touched on by the various speakers deserved some little comment in reply. The hon. member for South Brisbane, Mr. Ferricks, mentioned the "Canastota" incident. What happened in connection with that vessel stunned the community. The disaster was due to negligence, or what should be described as criminal negligence. The Government were rather hopeless in the matter.

Mr. GREEN: Are any of our own officials responsible?

The TREASURER: No. Last year regulations were promulgated under his name which provided—

"No petroleum shall be taken on board any vessel in any port or place in Queensland without a special permit, in writing, from a shipping inspector, or some other person authorised by the Marine Board to issue such permits."

There was some doubt as to whether those regulations were really enforceable or whether they were *ultra vires*. He had had inquiries made of the shipping firm concerned and also of the Vacuum Oil Company, and he proposed later on to lay the papers on the table for the perusal of hon. members. The Vacuum Oil Company and Dalgety and Company, Limited, had expressed deep regret for not having applied for a permit, but that was not much comfort to the bereaved relatives of the unfortunate people who were drowned. It was hardly possible to discuss the matter dispassionately in view of the negligence shown. However, he would lay the papers on the table, and would endeavour to institute proceedings, even though a conviction could not be obtained, in order to call attention more forcibly to the matter. The hon. member for South Brisbane and the hon. member for Brisbane had taken the matter up previously. As they had pointed out, it required some drastic action; and, if the Government had no power to inflict a severe penalty, they should take some means of calling public attention to the matter. It was a very unusual thing for petroleum to be loaded in Brisbane. It was usually unloaded. The petroleum in question was an inferior class of oil, and the agents here would not take delivery, so they had actually to unship the oil and reship it, but they did not get a permit. The shipping company and the Vacuum Oil Company made the excuse that the thing was so unusual that they did not think it necessary to get a permit; nevertheless, there was gross and

criminal negligence somewhere. The article in the newspapers calling attention to it might have been a little on the sensational side, but the fact remained that the boat was lost and those people were drowned.

The hon. member for Albert referred to the river channels and also to the beacons in the southern end of Moreton Bay. Very few men knew Moreton Bay so well as the hon. member. He would have inquiries made into those matters. He would point out that the Boat Passage had a depth, at low water, of 3 feet 6 inches.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Some of the pleasure boats draw up to 4 feet, and the traders require a greater depth.

The TREASURER: The traders who carried on their operations in and around Redland Bay and the islands and further on towards Jumpin Pin, knew the impossibility of maintaining a greater depth than 3 feet 6 inches in the Boat Passage. The Government could hardly keep on eternally spending money in order to keep the channel at a depth of 4 feet. However, he would have the matter looked into.

The hon. member also referred to dredging operations in the Brisbane River. Up to Bulimba there was a depth of 26 feet, which he understood really meant 23 feet. The channel was 400 feet wide at every point, and from Bulimba to South Brisbane there was a depth of 24 feet, which meant 26 feet.

The hon. member for Windsor referred to the trawler. There was a proposal to experiment again for a period of six weeks on the Southern coast in the neighbourhood of the Clarence River, where the New South Wales experiments had been very successful. In the meantime any offer for the trawler would be accepted on the spot. Then the hon. member for Townsville referred to two or three matters in connection with the Flinders Passage and so forth, and the absence of a light at Thursday Island. The first was a Commonwealth matter, just as the post office was an entirely Commonwealth matter. It was not a function of the State at all. For some years before federation, the State kept a light at Thursday Island, and after federation, but it was never used. The tide was so dangerous that no ship would go in at night even at high tide under normal conditions. Probably during a period of war the port would be used. However, it was a Commonwealth matter. He could give the hon. member for Townsville the assurance that the hon. member for Cook had been hammering away at the matter for four years, and he (Mr. Fihelly), as Treasurer, had taken the matter up with the Commonwealth Government on several occasions, but without satisfaction.

Mr. VOWLES: We would like to see the correspondence.

The TREASURER: He would gladly show the papers to the leader of the Opposition that afternoon. He hoped the leader of the Opposition did not doubt his word.

Mr. SWAYNE: What about the people on the islands near Mackay?

The TREASURER: As he had informed the hon. member for Mirani by interjection, he would do everything in his power to make the lot of those people as comfortable as possible. The boat that was used to convey mails and stores to the lighthouses would also carry them, if possible, for the people

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referred to by the hon. member. The expenditure of a few pounds was neither here nor there. He assured the hon. member for Mirani that he would inquire into the matter, and see if something could be done.

Question put and passed.

MARINE BOARD.

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

“That £4,117 be granted for ‘Marine Board.’”

There was nothing much to say in connection with the vote, except that there was a decrease of £398 as compared with the appropriation of last year. There was a decrease of one in the staff. The board consisted of the portmaster and general representatives of different shipping interests, including men and owners alike.

Mr. PETRIE: The secretary has got a reduction.

The TREASURER: What happened there was that the secretary resigned or disappeared, and one of the clerks was appointed to his position.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: Did you say that he disappeared?

The TREASURER: Yes. That was no reflection on the late secretary. It was better not to discuss the matter.

Question put and passed.

PRINTING OFFICE.

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

“That £178,487 be granted for ‘Printing Office.’”

Although there had been a reduction in the staff, there was an increase in the amount asked for as compared with last year. Hon. members knew there were fluctuations in the price of paper, which could not be controlled by the department, and the different awards acted in the direction of increasing expenditure. The Government paid the employees at the Printing Office on a higher scale than private employers. That was a good thing, because they had a most efficient staff, and hon. members would see from the reports that came from that office that the work done there was of high-class character. He did not know any establishment in Australia which turned out as good work—artistically and otherwise—as the Queensland Government Printing Office. It was an institution of which they could very well be proud.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*) asked for some information in regard to the stock on hand at the Printing Office, as he understood it was depleted. There were large stocks before the war, but he understood they had all been sold.

Mr. POLLOCK: Considering the difficulty of getting paper, you could not expect anything else.

Mr. VOWLES: He quite agreed with the Treasurer about the fluctuations in the price of material. He understood that a lot of material that was bought cheaply had since been sold and had not been replenished. He would like a comparison of the present

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stock with the stock that was held a few years ago. He understood that certain men were employed at the Printing Office who did no work at all. One man carried a package from one side of the office in the morning and carried it back again in the afternoon, and that was about all the work he did.

The TREASURER: That is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: He was informed to that effect, and he thought some inquiry should be made, because Government departments were not benevolent asylums.

The TREASURER: The man in charge would not tolerate that.

Mr. VOWLES: He understood that there was one man employed there who had not done any work for a couple of years.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): The report of the Government Printing Office, taken with the statement of the Auditor-General, showed that the position of the institution was a satisfactory one. In some minor directions there might be political control at the Printing Office, but the Government Printer was a man who would not allow political control to interfere with his administration. At any rate, he would not like to be the Minister who attempted to try it on with the Government Printer, because something would happen. The report disclosed a satisfactory state of affairs. After providing for £4,000 for depreciation of machinery, there was a profit for the year of £25,787.

The TREASURER: That also makes provision for the payment of rent.

Mr. TAYLOR: That was most satisfactory. There had been an increase in the profits from all departments except three. The stocks on hand on 30th June last were valued at £60,000, so the sales the leader of the Opposition referred to must have taken place since then.

He thought it was a mistake for political organisations, whether Labour, Nationalists, or Country party, to have their printing done at the Printing Office with the stamp of the Government Printer thereon. In the best interests of the State that practice should be stopped.

The TREASURER: The work is good in the context and good in the make-up.

Mr. TAYLOR: It was bad in the context but good in the make-up. All political parties should have their printing done in outside institutions. If circulars were issued bearing the name of the Government Printer which stated all the good things the Government had done—another Government would issue similar pamphlets over the Government Printer's name telling all the bad things the present Government had done, and it was time that sort of thing was stopped.

The TREASURER: If you like, you can arrange to get all your printing done by the “Worker.”

Mr. TAYLOR: He had nothing to say against the Government Printer competing with outside offices, if he could do the work as cheaply and as well as they, but they should not allow political pamphlets to be issued from the Printing Office.

Mr. SIZER (*Nundah*): He understood a scheme was in contemplation for the curtailment of work at the Printing Office. It would certainly reduce the efficiency of the office

if that was carried out. Many firms in town found the work at the Printing Office most efficient, while it could be done cheaper than by private firms.

The TREASURER: Yet your leader would prevent our party getting our printing done there.

Mr. SIZER: His leader was speaking more or less in regard to political pamphlets. The Opposition had a certain amount of doubt as to whether that work was paid for, and that was the reason for their objection to it. He knew that much private work had to be turned down on account of certain arrangements which would not permit of the Government Printer handling [12.30 p.m.] that work. The department had returned to the Treasury a large profit on the year's transactions, and the policy of the Government should be to extend the office wherever possible and go into the business which was profitable, instead of wasting time on that which was unprofitable.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): The hon. member for Nundah, he took it, was not against the Government Printing Office doing outside work.

Mr. SIZER: No.

The TREASURER: The hon. member for Bulimba at one time was very strongly against the Government Printer taking outside work. An incident had occurred about nine years ago, when the hon. member, who was the Treasurer of the day, refused to allow the Water and Sewerage Board to have their printing done at the Government Printing Office.

Some reference had been made to interference with the Government Printer. The only person who had endeavoured to interfere with the Government Printer was the hon. member for Bulimba, who, when Treasurer, said, "You must take no outside work." Afterwards, he understood, the hon. gentleman complained about some other matter of quite a personal nature. The suggestion, he believed, was that the work of the office should be opened with morning prayer. (Laughter.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: You could do with a little of that yourself.

The TREASURER: It was a purely commercial transaction to have pamphlets printed at the Government Printing Office. He (Mr. Fihelly) had generally been associated with the pamphleteering part of his party's activities, and he liked it to be well done—good context, good arguments, good reasoning, and an attractive get-up. Some men in the Government Printing Office had shown they were really artists in that special kind of work.

Mr. MORGAN: Cannot the "Worker" do it?

The TREASURER: He understood that the hon. member for Murilla at one time was associated with some paper in Victoria. The hon. member, therefore, would understand that the machinery used in a newspaper office was quite different to that used in an extensive institution like the Government Printing Office. He thought they should be very well satisfied with the office, which had made a good profit last year. He was endeavouring to ascertain what stocks

were held. So far as he knew, they had not refused any outside work. The instructions were to take as much as could be obtained—instructions diametrically opposite to those issued by the hon. member for Bulimba when he was Treasurer.

Hon. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The hon. gentleman said he had heard that at one time the "Brisbane Courier" had been printed at the Government Printing Office. As a matter of fact, on one occasion the "Worker" machinery broke down, and the proprietors were in a dilemma with regard to getting their paper out. He had given authority for the work to be done at the Government Printing Office, in order that the "Worker" might be issued in time. He could only conclude that that was why there were so many cartoons of him in the "Worker." Some day, when the Chairman was not very busy, and when the House was adjourned, he (Mr. Barnes) might have the privilege and pleasure of showing him his cartoon album. It really was most entertaining. Some were not very striking likenesses, but that did not matter very much. By and by, when, perhaps, the present member for Bulimba had ceased to exist, someone would say, "That hon. member for Bulimba was not a very good-looking fellow." (Laughter.)

The Government Printer was a most capable man, and had a most capable staff. A very great deal of work used to come to the Queensland Government Printer from the South.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Some comes from New Zealand.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Was that not an indication that the Government Printing Office in Queensland was able to hold its own with other offices in the Commonwealth in regard to the excellence of its work?

Reference had been made to pamphlets that had been sent out. It had been a very proper reference. No Government—whether they were National, Country party, or Labour—had a right to use the Government Printing Office for the circulation of their political views. The temptation was very great for work to be carried out—possibly some pressure having been brought to bear—at rates which might not be remunerative. It was exceedingly wrong for that to be done.

The TREASURER: Do you not think that any person who wants printing done should have the right to go there?

Hon. W. H. BARNES: When influence was exercised by the hon. member, then it was positively dangerous—the hon. member had asked for that retort—as it opened the door to all kinds of abuses. Then, again, if a member of Parliament who was not a member of the Cabinet, or possibly a member of the Cabinet, got a circular printed at the Government Printing Office, it would have a great deal more weight with the unthinking members of the community if they saw the name of the Government Printer at the bottom instead of the name of an ordinary printer. No Government but the present Government had adopted that practice. It was perfectly certain that the door had been opened in a way which might mean positive danger so far as the employees were concerned. They knew that the Treasurer, because an employee in another department did not express himself in the way

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he thought he should, gave him the "order of the sack."

The TREASURER: And any officer who does the same thing should get the sack, too.

HON. W. H. BARNES: "No victimisation" was in the forefront of the Government's policy.

The TREASURER: It was not victimisation; he lied publicly.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member knew that he did a mean and contemptible thing by that individual. He would like to know from the Treasurer what amount was spent last year on paper, machines, type, fuel, light, etc. The amount appropriated was £60,000, and there was an increase this year of £10,000.

The TREASURER: The figures asked for by the hon. member for Bulimba were—Paper, £77,584; electric current, £1,155; linotype metal, £1,135; type, etc., £646; new plant, £322; sundries (plant), £738; timber, £222; gas, water, sanitation, £1,086; sundries, £1,826. They spent, therefore, about £84,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Then, how far will the £70,000 go this year?

The TREASURER: He thought it would be all right this year. Paper had come down, for one thing. The profit for the year, notwithstanding the extra expenditure, amounted to £25,000, which was eminently satisfactory.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Whilst he had no objection whatever to the Government Printing Office entering into competition with outside printing offices, he thought that, on the other hand, outside printing offices should be able to enter into competition with the Government Printer, and that the Government departments should obtain prices from outside firms to see whether the Government Printer was really profiteering on Government work or not. He had been told by several shire clerks in his district that the Government Printer was charging exorbitant prices for books and other things which they were compelled to get from him.

The TREASURER: There is no truth in that.

Mr. MORGAN: He understood there was truth in it. Up to the last year or two the local authorities were able to get those books wherever they desired. If the Government Printer was charging exorbitant prices to Government departments, it was easy for him to show a profit, and, in order to find out whether he was actually able to compete with outside printing offices, some of the Government departments should call for tenders, the Government Printer tendering for that work just as he would for outside work. There was no reason why the Government Printing Office should be subsidised by other departments. The prices of material had gone up considerably during the last four or five years. Had anything been done to ascertain whether the Government Printer was not now charging exorbitant prices?

The TREASURER: That is not so.

Mr. MORGAN: Had any inquiries been made?

The TREASURER: Yes. As a matter of fact, I know of one department which got quotations quite recently from the Government Printer and from all the other printers in town.

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Mr. MORGAN: He was very glad to hear it. It was all very well for the Government Printer to show a profit of £25,000 when customers were compelled to deal with him.

The TREASURER: It would be a tragic state of affairs if the Government did not deal from him. We keep a regular check.

Mr. MORGAN: For instance, the Railway Department might save thousands of pounds in the year if it called for tenders for its printing.

The TREASURER: You mentioned local authorities. Can you give us some specific cases?

Mr. MORGAN: He was in his own shire office recently, and the clerk showed him some books, and said that the price was 200 per cent. or 300 per cent. dearer than before 1914, and that the council were not allowed to get them from private firms.

The TREASURER: Who stops them?

Mr. MORGAN: He thought they were books in the form required for audit purposes.

The TREASURER: The next time you see him, you ask him for more definite information, and then consult me. I think he is under a misapprehension.

Mr. MORGAN: He would. He had said to the shire clerk, "Why do you have to go to the Government Printer?" and he had replied, "We are compelled to go to the Government Printer whether we like it or not." The shire clerk had also shown him the prices that were charged in 1914 for certain things that had been procured from a firm in Brisbane. He would make further inquiries.

The TREASURER: The Government Printer only charges sufficient to allow of a fair profit.

Mr. MORGAN: The Government had no right to compel local authorities or anybody else to get their printing done by the Government Printer unless the Government Printer was able to show that he could do the work cheaper than an outside firm. The matter should be left to the local authorities. The Commissioner for Railways, if he so desired, should have power to call for tenders for printing, and the Government Printer could put in a tender, and, if he could prove to the Commissioner that he was able to do the work as cheaply as an outside firm, he should get the work, but not otherwise. That should apply to all Government departments. Thousands of pounds per annum were spent on printing.

The TREASURER: The Railway Commissioner has his own printer.

Mr. MORGAN: To a certain extent, but the Government Printer also did some of his work. The Government Printing Office should be in the same position as any other printing office. It should stand only on its merits, and should be self-supporting. The Government Printer should not be able to have special customers whom he could charge what he desired and make a profit, when, perhaps, on other jobs he was actually making a loss. The Government Printer should not be able to say, "I have thousands of pounds' worth of printing every year from the different Government departments, and I can charge what I please," and then, in order to keep his machines and men employed full time, tender for outside work

and do that work at a loss. Very often a factory manufactured certain goods for local consumption for which they got the full value, but they very often sent goods to other parts of the world and sold them at a loss in order to keep their machinery and their staffs running full time. The Government Printer, because of the fact that he had numerous customers in the different Government departments whom he could charge exorbitant prices, was in a better position to tender for outside work.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you know of any Government in Australia doing what you are suggesting?

MR. MORGAN: He was not troubling about any other Governments. If other Governments were adopting a system that was wrong, the Queensland Government should not adopt it. He knew a little about newspaper work and jobbing work, and knew what he was talking about. The Government departments should pay only a fair and reasonable price.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): He would like to make some reference to the uses the Government Printing Office had been put to. Just before the last general elections a certain speech was delivered in another place. That speech was distributed all over the State. He had received several copies. The amount of money wasted by the Government on that occasion showed that the Treasurer was oblivious to the needs of the State. If there was ever a travesty in connection with a Governor's Speech, it was that speech, and the Treasurer was a party to distributing it broadcast, as he was official head of the Government Printing Office. He did not know whether the speech was distributed in the railway carriages, but wherever one went he found copies. It was done entirely for party purposes, and was a reflection upon those who had anything to do with it. Yet they were told that the Government Printing Office should be used for printing political propaganda. Probably there was a good deal in what had been said by other hon. members. There was always a temptation to charge the various departments excessive prices, because there was no one to compete with. It was perfectly clear that an amount of £2,126 had been spent in the distribution of the Governor's Speech last year. It was surprising that a Treasurer, with any sense of self-respect as a Treasurer, should send out a document of that kind, and allow himself to be a party to making the officers of the Government Printing Office responsible for sending it out in the way in which they did. He did not know what the Government were coming to in that respect. It meant that the very high traditions that used to weigh with men conducting public affairs had gone, and the Treasurer was largely responsible for bringing that about.

Question put and passed.

STORES.

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

"That £8,396 be granted for 'Stores.'"
There was a reduction of one in the staff. There was an increase in the vote of £452, due to the ordinary automatic increases.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): He wished to ask the Treasurer what policy was being pursued at the Government Stores in

connection with purchases. With the increasing value of many articles, the

[2 p.m.] responsibility of the Government Storekeeper was becoming greater.

There was one particular phase he wished to get information about from the Treasurer. Had the Government Storekeeper full authority, when making purchases, to get quotations outside? He thought that the Government Storekeeper should avail himself of every opportunity of buying in the cheapest market. He had nothing to say against any official in the department; his experience was that all the officers were always anxious to do their very best. There used to be a policy in operation under which the Government, when they wanted certain lines, took advantage, through the Government Storekeeper, of giving an opportunity to business people to quote prices. Was that policy, which was discontinued in certain directions, going to be revived? At one time, business people were asked by the Government Storekeeper every Monday morning to quote for certain lines and supply samples; and, after examining the quality of the samples, the storekeeper would make a choice and buy in the best market. Since the incoming of the State enterprises, that policy in some directions had been put on one side, and the result was detrimental to the department and was bringing about great dangers in regard to some of the State enterprises. It was not desirable that any manager of a State department should be in the position of having no competitors, and should be able to obtain supplies through another department without any competition. It was unbusinesslike, and it opened the door—especially in enterprises which were getting into a tight corner—to very great abuses. Was it a fair thing to suggest to any State enterprise, "Here is an order; fill it, and put on your own price"? That was unbusinesslike and unfair to the trading community.

THE TREASURER: If the price is satisfactory, I do not see any objection to it.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Surely a State enterprise ought to be put on all fours with private enterprises in regard to competition. He was dealing more particularly with what might be called the produce section, in which he knew that competition was not being allowed, and it was putting the department into a position in which it should not be placed. Seeing that there was a rumour that the State Produce Agency had had a very bad year, was there not a temptation, when quoting for stores, to try and make up in other directions for some of the losses made? The Treasurer shook his head, but the fact remained that it was an open door which was a positive danger—he did not care who the manager or the parties were—to the trading community generally. If the Treasurer was going to make a purchase for himself, would he, if he had a considerable sum of money to expend, be satisfied with one quotation? He was sure the hon. gentleman would not.

THE TREASURER: It is a transaction between one department and another, and you assume that one department will be dishonest to another department.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The element of human nature came into all these things. He was on very sound ground in saying that if a Government department was being well run, it should not hesitate to get quotations outside the State agencies. Was it at all

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likely that the Government Storekeeper, knowing the policy of the Government, would at any time favour those who were outside State enterprises? He would certainly err, if there was competition, in giving orders to parties who were associated with State enterprises. The whole policy was wrong, and ought to be rectified.

The TREASURER (Hon. J. A. Fihelly, *Paddington*): The remarks of the hon. member for Bulimba on this matter were rather interesting. The Stores Department was not run for profit, although profit was made—last year a profit of £5,000 being made, which was paid into the consolidated revenue. The Storekeeper had almost absolute discretion, and secured samples and quotations.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: He does not in all cases.

The TREASURER: He had a few contracts, and with the exception of the State Produce Agency, his work was untrammelled. They should support their own enterprises or else wipe them out. Some time ago, the Government Printing Office had been subjected to criticism; it was urged that it was not bearing the same charges as private concerns, and was able to quote lower prices; but, if the Government Printing Office did not do printing as cheaply as outside firms, allowing for the slightly better conditions given to the workers, it would have to close up. That was the only logical thing. If one State enterprise was not going to help another State enterprise, then one should go. It was inconceivable that any official employed in a State enterprise would extort something, through the Stores Department, from another department that he had no right to. If an officer were guilty of malpractices, he would be dealt with very summarily. It was the policy of the Government, believing as they did in nationalisation, that one State enterprise should help another. He knew some very prominent officers in the Government service who were against nationalisation, and the best protest they could enter against nationalisation would be to resign and be no longer employed by the Government. That was logic. It would be unthinkable for the Government to permit the manager of the State Produce Agency to insure with a private insurance company while there was a State Insurance Department; otherwise they might as well wipe the whole thing out. The ethics of the thing were clear, though the principle of nationalisation might be argued. Those opposed to nationalisation might say that the Government should go out, and they might say they were against nationalisation altogether; but the Government were pledged to the nationalisation of most utilities, and, believing in that principle, they must carry it out in its entirety. He would point out to the hon. member for Bulimba that the State did not lose through it.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: How do you know?

The TREASURER: He would give one illustration where the Government Printer quoted slightly above the price of an outside firm, but he was able to demonstrate that it was only the difference between the wages paid by the Government Printer and the wages paid outside.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: And he got the job.

The TREASURER: And he got the job, which was quite right. If the State Produce

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Agency were to charge other departments an unfair price through the Stores Branch, the Storekeeper would report it immediately.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Probably he would be afraid to do so, by reason of the policy of the Government.

The TREASURER: If the State enterprises people and the Government Storekeeper conspired together in regard to giving quotations, he would not tolerate it; and, if he found the Storekeeper winked at any overcharge to another subdepartment, that would be the end of the Storekeeper.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: Your argument is nothing but sophistry.

The TREASURER: Not at all. It would be inconceivable to think that, having a State Insurance Office they could allow any subdepartment to insure outside. With the exception of the State Produce Agency and other State enterprises, quotations were sought and samples were secured, and they made certain contracts. If it could be shown that a State enterprise charged more than a private concern, then it would have to go by the board.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): The Treasurer in the illustration he gave stated definitely that the Government Printer submitted a price, and the Produce Agency had shown that they could get the work done cheaper outside; but, because it was a State enterprise, the work had to go to the Government Printer.

The TREASURER: That is not so. You are misrepresenting the matter.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: In connection with other matters, the Government Storekeeper did not get an opportunity of testing the market.

The TREASURER: His instructions are that he has to report to me if he is charged more by a State enterprise than by a private individual.

Question put and passed.

WATER SUPPLY.

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

“That £23,970 be granted for ‘Water Supply.’”

That was a decrease on the appropriation of last year of £12,694, but it was an increase in the actual expenditure of £2,800. Excellent work was being carried out by the Water Supply Department, but it was mostly of a preliminary character, such as the investigation of storage sites for reservoirs and the conservation of water for irrigation purposes, stream gauging, etc. That was a work that met with the approval of every hon. member, and the vote could not very well be cut down.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): He noticed that there was a decrease of £12,964, of which £7,650 was in connection with wages, field assistance, observers and recorders, instruments, purchase of plant, etc., and he presumed that was due to the fact that the works had been stopped and the men put off.

The TREASURER: When the instruments are bought you do not want to buy them again.

Mr. PETRIE: He was not referring so much to instruments.

The TREASURER: Last year £3,500 was voted for the purchase of plant. This year only £500 is required for that purpose.

Mr. PETRIE: That was a very important vote. The Inkerman irrigation scheme and other irrigation works would be of great benefit to the country, but, according to the Auditor-General's report, the cost of the Inkerman irrigation scheme was considerably more than was anticipated.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman will not discuss that question.

Mr. PETRIE: There was an amended estimate so far as that work was concerned. He supposed that in the meantime the work was practically hung up.

The TREASURER: Oh, no! Any delay was merely due to the fact that there was a difficulty in securing material.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): The vote had always been a disappointment to Country members. Land settlement formed a big part in the future development of the State, and they could not have proper land settlement unless water facilities were provided as well. If one thing more than another was required in Queensland, it was surface water, yet they found in the past that, owing to the lack of water, settlers were hampered in their operations. He considered that the Water Supply Department did not help land settlement in the way it should do. The vote for water supply was small enough last year; but he noticed that the Treasurer was now asking for an appropriation of £23,970—a reduction of £12,694, as compared with last year. In spite of the fact that there was a larger number of settlers in the State, a lesser sum was voted for water supply. Last year the perpetual lease selections numbered 1308, and the prickly-pear selections showed 400, while there was a total in the number of selections taken up under all headings of 2,100, as compared with the previous twelve months. If the Water Supply Department did not think it necessary to visit the country districts, and give assistance to the men on the land, they ought to close up that department altogether. Instead of the Water Supply Department keeping up with the requirements of the State, they were merely tinkering with the matter. All the Acts relating to settlement depended upon water being supplied to the settlers. They had provision in their legislation for money to be granted to settlers under the State Advances Corporation; but, if they made application to that department, it would be turned down, because there was no water available on the selections. He would like to see the department supplied with sufficient funds to provide water whenever new land was taken up for selection. In fact, no new Crown land should be thrown open for selection unless there was a sufficient supply of water on each block.

Mr. BRENNAN: There would be no land settlement at all under that.

Mr. CORSER: It would be a protection for the individual who took up land, and then found he could not get any water.

Mr. HARTLEY: Under your proposal the big station owners would hang on to all the water frontages.

Mr. CORSER: The big station owners had no claim on the water frontages. The Water Supply Department was in the hands of a Labour Government, and the hon. member's interjection showed that he knew nothing about the matter. The hon. member for Fitzroy knew nothing about the administration of the Rights in Water Act at all.

Mr. HARTLEY: I know all about the tricks of your crowd, who hold the water frontages, and also hold the country at the back of them.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman knew nothing about the Act at all, because, if he read it through, he would find that all the rights to water were held by the Crown. The Crown not only held the rights to the water, but it was definitely laid down in the Act that the settler had no right to the water beyond the edge of the gravel, sand, or rubble in the creek. It was defined, when they were fixing the responsibility on the settler for destroying noxious weeds, that his responsibility ended where the gravel or sand in the creek began.

Mr. BRENNAN: That was settled by the High Court case.

Mr. CORSER: The Government secured from the Crown law officers a definition which showed that the settler had no right below the mark defined on the plan, and that mark commenced where the rubble, sand, or gravel started. That was a definition given by the Crown law office administered by the Labour Government, and it was in "Hansard."

Mr. HARTLEY: You cut his fence across the creek, and see what will happen.

Mr. CORSER: The fence had nothing to do with it. The squatter had no right to water on resumed areas—had no right to the water at all. The Government provided water-finders at an expense of about £700 a year, and they went round picking sites for water on land newly thrown open.

The TREASURER: They are water wizards or magicians. Do not reflect on one of your colleagues.

Mr. CORSER: He understood that there were 430 sites located by the water diviners last year out of a total of 2,100 farms thrown open.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. gentleman is not going to discuss water divining on this vote.

Mr. CORSER: The Government did nothing for the individual selector in connection with finding water for his holding.

The TREASURER: What about the Water Trusts?

Mr. CORSER: He was speaking about the individuals. The department always left it to the individual to find water for himself. Although they had legislation to make provision for water under the various Acts, when applications were made for assistance they were always turned down, although a selector might have no water on his property at all. That was one of the great troubles in their settlement conditions.

[2.30 p.m.] and it all hinged on the fact that they had not always surface water available. The department should make it available. The revenue during last year from alienated land was £1,600,000, while in the last four years the amount had been £5,695,515. The State also had secured during those four years £1,453,000 from the land tax. That made a total collection of over £7,000,000 from the alienated land, excluding shire councils' taxes by rating. Would it not be a good thing to provide water for the great territory they had not yet alienated?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman will have to deal with that matter

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on the vote which is to be found on page 122. He can only deal with the administration of the office on this vote.

Mr. CORSER: I am dealing with the question of the conservation of water.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman will see that the only items in this vote are those relating to the salaries of officers.

Mr. CORSER: There were items dealing with field assistants, instruments, and purchase of plant.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman can deal with those items, but not with the actual vote for water conservation. That will be found on page 122.

Mr. CORSER: He was merely pointing out that, as the State received £7,000,000 from the alienated lands which had water provided, they could get a great deal more if they provided water for the great tracts of country which were not alienated. The wages of the field assistants, etc., had been reduced from £3,050 to £1,000, and the amount for the purchase of instruments, the maintenance of gauging stations, etc., had been reduced from £3,100 to £500. The Treasurer's excuse was not the real excuse for that decrease. The hon. gentleman said they had not to keep on buying them.

The TREASURER: If you build a Parliament House this year, you do not require to build it next year.

Mr. CORSER: During last year they had thrown open for selection 5,742,000 acres. Where were the instruments to deal with those selections?

The TREASURER: We have a sufficient number of instruments.

Mr. CORSER: Why reduce the vote for instruments when they were increasing the area of land opened? The Minister was not game to show them the reports. Why did he not give them the Treasury report and the report of the hydraulic engineer, so that they would not be in the dark when discussing these things?

The TREASURER: Any member who wants those reports can have a copy. I saved the expense of printing.

Mr. CORSER: He was entering a protest against the small vote of £2,325 for the conservation of water in a State having 85,000,000 acres of land under settlement conditions.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): He noticed the assistant engineer received £405 a year, whereas there was a clerk at £500 a year. Those positions should be reversed.

The TREASURER: Previously two were employed; now there is only one.

Mr. WARREN: That did not explain why the clerk was getting more than the scientific man.

The TREASURER: Do you want him reduced? He is classified by the Public Service Commissioner.

Mr. WARREN: At Inkerman, where the principal part of the money was being spent, it seemed to him it was being practically wasted. He had a table showing the whole area was 26,800 acres and cost on the average £2 1s. per acre. The benefited area comprised 10,500 acres, costing £5 4s. 7d. per acre. The cultivated area was 7,500 acres, costing £7 6s. 5d. per acre. The settlers

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would be right away from the big markets and they would not be able to pay £7 6s. 5d. per acre.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you know they are going to get £3 5s. per ton for some of their cane in that area?

Mr. WARREN: Within a few miles of Melbourne were the Bacchus Marsh irrigation works, where the land was equal to any land in Queensland, and where they were obtaining their water for 5s. per acre. At not one irrigation works, right up to Burrinjuck in New South Wales, did the cost of water exceed £1 1s. per acre. If that were the case where the settlers went in for intensive cultivation, he did not know how the settlers at Inkerman could pay that enormous amount. Some of the big irrigation works raised the water probably as many feet as it was proposed to raise it at Inkerman; but his opinion was that the cost would exceed the amount stated. The vote was a paltry one considering their great extent of country. The Government were dealing with this matter in the same way in which they dealt with the Department of Agriculture, which was a disgrace to the State. The Secretary for Agriculture was not to blame for that; he probably would spend wisely a great deal more money than was made available for the department. And as the Department of Agriculture was a disgrace to the State, so were those irrigation works. They had plenty of country and plenty of means for irrigation, yet settlers had not received the slightest encouragement. The Government ought to exploit the possibilities of irrigation. The great desire of people all over the world was to get on the land, and irrigation was one of the means to help them to settle on the land.

Mr. HARTLEY: Your people say that the desire is to get into the city.

Mr. WARREN: So it was, unfortunately. People did not want to go on the land, because it was not fashionable; but people who were wellwishers of the State wanted to get the people settled on the land, and irrigation was a means of accomplishing it. If the farmers were to grow crops successfully by irrigation, it must be done as it was done in other places—that was, by giving them water as cheaply as possible. He made inquiries in New South Wales some time ago about the Leighton Irrigation Works, and he found that the water cost something less than 19s. per acre; but, with intensive cultivation, and the large amount they were producing, there was great dissatisfaction, because they were not making it a success. That area was on the Murrumbidgee River, and within easier distance of the markets of Australia than Inkerman. In fairness to that scheme, he must say that the Leighton people were getting a slightly better price for their canned fruit, yet at that time they were discouraged and, unfortunately, were leaving.

The TREASURER: That is the history of every irrigation scheme in the world.

Mr. WARREN: He admitted that it was the history of all settlement; but it was not the history of all settlement to come very near breaking point in the matter of finance, and, on the figures he had given, the Inkerman scheme was very near breaking point. He wanted to be absolutely fair and admit that it was not safe to make a comparison with other irrigation works, but the very

fact that the Leighton scheme was only just on the point of succeeding showed that it was necessary to be very careful.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): In a country like Queensland, where there was so much difficulty about water, which meant so much to settlement, the Water Supply Department should be one of the chief departments of the State. Its services should be used a great deal more than they were. Some ten years ago he was over a large stretch of country where in one place there was a very large lagoon, which seemed to be fed by streams, and thus kept at the same level. He maintained at the time that, if a pumping plant had been installed, under a water board, an enormous amount of money spent by farmers in trying to get water—which they did not always succeed in getting; it was a very dry district—would have been saved, because the water could have been taken to the different farms, as was the case in the dry districts in Victoria.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Where was that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The Kingaroy line. The country was very closely settled. If that had been done, not 20 per cent. of the money which had been spent by the farmers on getting water would have been expended. At that time £150 would have gone a good way in carrying pipes to a farm, but many of the farmers had spent hundreds of pounds, and some had not got water yet.

In all their Queensland districts, more especially in those below the range, he had seen many places where there were subterranean streams, on which windmills had been placed for 40 or 50 miles. He maintained that those streams should have been reserved just the same as their surface rivers were reserved. One butter factory spent hundreds of pounds in looking for water, whereas within less than a quarter of a mile there was a subterranean stream 60 feet wide with an almost unlimited supply, which eventually they obtained.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who found that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did. (Laughter.) That showed that subterranean streams did exist, and the State should make the best of them. In considering nearly every irrigation scheme they had to face the question of whether the whole cost should be charged to the land concerned, or whether they were going to make it a national work and write off a certain amount of the cost. He believed he was correct in saying that something like £3,000,000 had been written off in connection with the Burrinjuck irrigation scheme in New South Wales. They had to consider whether the works were practicable, and whether they were worth the expenditure of money. They had to consider whether, after they established the works at Inkerman, if they had to wipe off half the cost, it was worth carrying out the scheme. Was it not better to cultivate millions of acres along the coast of Queensland that did not need irrigation? If they were going to spend money in irrigation, they had to consider whether it was worth the cost, and whether it would pay interest on the money, or whether they would not have to wipe off half the cost before the farmers could make it pay.

The TREASURER: I think you will agree with me that, first of all, we should put into use land that does not require irrigating.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That was exactly what he said. There were very big difficulties in carrying out irrigation in Queensland. As the Secretary for Public Lands knew perfectly well, if they dammed up a river in the far West in one place, it would break out in another. He wanted to impress upon the Treasurer that, when the irrigation scheme was finished at Inkerman, it would be absolutely impossible for the farmers to pay £7 6s. 5d. per acre per annum for the water, and it would be a question of wiping off a very big part of the cost of the scheme as a bad debt.

Question put and passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

CHIEF OFFICE.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrago*) moved—

“That £60,509 be granted for ‘Chief Office.’”

There was an increase of £4,094 on the vote for last year. That was accounted for by award increases in salaries and salaries for four assessing rangers, amounting to £1,380. There would be an increased expenditure of £800 for “Equipment allowances, Assessing Commissioners, and rangers.” There was an additional salary of £385 for a valuation clerk, and £320 for a draftsman. “Traveling and incidental expenses, assessing,” necessitated an increased expenditure of £1,000.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): He did not think that they had anything to boast of in the administration of the Lands Department during last year. He would not say that the policy of the department had not been carried out very effectively by the administrators of that department; but it was the policy that he complained about. Where stringent measures were necessary the administrative heads of the department had certainly put their heel down as firmly as possible to see that the conditions were carried out.

Mr. FORDE: What is wrong with the policy?

At 2.55 p.m.,

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

Mr. CORSER: It was bad in the main. In the first place, it did not permit a man who made a farm out of a wilderness to hold the title of that land after he had converted it into a farm.

Mr. FORDE: The “Primary Producers’ Review,” your official organ, says that leasehold is the better tenure.

Mr. CORSER: It was not the official organ of the Queensland Farmers’ Union. He claimed it was the official organ of hon. members opposite. The great asset of the State was its land. Careful land administration under good and easy settlement conditions was what they wanted more than anything else to-day.

He would bring under the notice of the Minister the old homestead conditions of some years ago, when the old supposed Tory Government existed in Queensland. Any man in the State, or any farmer’s son, or any unemployed individual, could go on the land and take up 320 acres under freehold

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conditions at 2s. 6d. an acre, repayable in eight years. Those conditions had been responsible for the settlement of their best settled localities up to the present time. To-day they were labouring under the perpetual lease conditions, which were not acceptable to the man who had to settle on the land. It was designed by industrialists who sat in caucus in Brisbane and devised the policy of the Labour party. They did not want to go on the land. If real good settlement and a real prosperous Queensland was wanted, they should have good settlement conditions. They should offer to every industrial worker a piece of freehold land on which he could have his own home and his own furniture, and give to the man in the bush the freehold title of a piece of land that would bring him a decent living. They would then have a prosperous community and a community that would be proud of their State. They wanted to breed up a sentiment that Queensland was second to no country in the world. They could easily do that by making people both in the town and in the country satisfied, and making them feel that they owned a part of the State themselves. That would wipe away the idea of the communistic platform that they had heard so much about during the last few weeks. A man who owned a bit of freehold land and his own home would never be a communist and would never support the communistic platform that had been adopted by the party opposite during the last few weeks. They were faced with the sorry spectacle of 1,000,000 acres of Crown lands being lost to Queensland every year through the prickly-pear pest. Over 30,000,000 acres of their land were now infested with the pest.

Mr. BRENNAN: Who brought it here?

Mr. CORSER: Probably the hon. member's great grandfather—he did not know. What he was concerned about was that, now that it was here, more should be done to protect those who kept their property clean from the pest. That was bringing it down to a minimum. More should be done to protect those people who were compelled to keep their property clean, and whose property was being invaded by seeds and plants from adjoining areas belonging to the Crown. It was the duty of the Crown to make it possible for the settler to fulfil his conditions and for the local authorities to carry out their conditions of cleaning up lightly infested country in districts where there existed bunches of pear on areas of 100 acres or more, which were nothing but nurseries in districts where the pear had not got away from them altogether. He noticed that in

some of the Western districts, the [3 p.m.] Barcoo for instance, certain areas were being infested from small tracts of pear which existed there. Those tracts should be cleared, as otherwise they would be a menace to areas of land on which people were settling. Under the present system, perpetual lease prickly-pear selections were being opened to individuals, when it was impossible for them to clear the pear, and it was time they reviewed the whole position. The Government should appoint a prickly-pear board to go into the whole matter, and to advise the department as to what was required. In his opinion, the Lands Department officials and heads of branches had not seriously taken the prickly-pear trouble on their shoulders. They had not

made any suggestions since the late Hon. J. T. Bell was Secretary for Public Lands which would assist in the eradication of pear on areas which were lightly infested. The Minister would admit that that statement was correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not. I will admit nothing of the kind.

Mr. CORSER: There were no new classes of tenure. They had the prickly-pear tenure, the prickly-pear frontage tenure, and perpetual lease prickly-pear selections; those were the only tenures they had got. In some districts there were areas which were clearable, and they should clear them as soon as possible. The Crown should undertake the responsibility of clearing Crown land areas, and not leave them infested with pear, which was a menace to the surrounding settlers who had cleared their areas. Out on the Western Railway line from Toowoomba, there were areas which could have been cleared years ago; but because they were inferior lands they were neglected and left to become overgrown with pear, and be a burden to the selectors.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You can see any amount of prickly-pear around Gayndah.

Mr. CORSER: They could see it around Gayndah, but no people had taxed themselves—to clear the pear—more heavily than the people around Gayndah, Rawbelle, and Degilbo. They had subscribed a large amount of money on which the Government subsidy of £1 for £1 was paid, to clear the roads alone. They had now in the State 79,509,201 acres of grazing and scrub selections, 2,694,626 acres under perpetual lease selection, and 342,832 acres under mining leases, making a very fair total, but nothing in comparison to what it would be if only the large tracts of land along the railway lines were freed from prickly-pear. Where there was no pear along the railway line those areas should be made available to producers. They had opened up land by railways, but it could not be said that the fullest opportunity had been given to agrarian occupation along the railway. They should devise some scheme to settle the land along the railway lines from which produce could be raised to help to keep the railways running. The Lands Department had a duty in that regard.

He had been informed on a previous occasion that any reference to Mr. Temple Clerk could be made on this vote. That gentleman had been asking investigations into the prickly-pear question for the last ten or fifteen years through the Lands Department. He (Mr. Corser) was one of those who thought that Mr. Temple Clerk's devotion to the prickly-pear question had not been wasted. About ten years ago he sent to America several varieties of prickly-pear, to see if an insect could be found which would feed on the plants. Later on cochineal insects were sent out to Queensland to be experimented with. Since then a second lot of cochineal insects had been successfully propagated. Mr. Temple Clerk had met with a severe accident, and had had to sell his valuable pictures and personal effects so as to be able to hand over those insects to the State. He had, unfortunately, now lost his sight, and had had to give up his work. He understood that the Lands Department had kindly allowed him six months' pay on retirement. The Committee would acknow-

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ledge the valuable work which Mr. Temple Clerk had done. The Government should encourage others to do experimental work in this direction, by showing that in their failing years such officials would not be left in want. He hoped the Government would see that Mr. Temple Clerk was enabled to enjoy the comfort which was necessary in his last years.

So far as the administration of the department was concerned, the Minister had lent a kindly ear to their requests, but he was sorry that the policy of the department prohibited the necessary assistance being given to returned soldiers.

Mr. BRENNAN: In what way?

Mr. CORSER: In the first place, it was hard that the conditions of soldier settlement should be more difficult than those of the ordinary settler. An ordinary settler could take up a perpetual lease, and after five years he could transfer it and get back the money he had put in and also any additional amount received from the sale of the lease, but a soldier settler had to reside on the land for ten years before he could put it on the market. After five years some ailment he had received at the front might have become pronounced, and he might be unable to carry on, but he could not realise on the selection except to another returned soldier. He would like to know from the Minister how the settlement at Beerburum was getting on, and whether the report drawn up for Mr. Hunter by Mr. Enos Newett, had proved to be correct. The late Secretary for Public Lands, some few years ago, called upon one of his great supporters—a practical farmer in the Burnett district—to report on the Beerburum settlement. He was brought down at the cost of the State, but that report had never been made public. He would like to know the nature of the report.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have no knowledge of whom you are referring to.

Mr. CORSER: Mr. Enos Newett was asked to make a report, and he would like to know what a good, practical Labour man said in regard to the Beerburum settlement. When the soldiers took up those lands they were debited with £100 each for the clearing of 4 acres; and yet the average amount advanced to returned soldiers on Crown lands during the last twelve months had been only £333 apiece.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He rose to a point of order. That matter could be discussed on the Loan vote, and had nothing to do with the vote under discussion.

Mr. CORSER: It could hardly be dissociated from the vote under discussion. They knew that the ordinary selector was entitled to £1,200, which was made available through the State Advances Corporation, and it was about time the soldiers themselves made some inquiry as to why it was that they had only received £333 each, although under the Soldier settlement scheme £625 was provided by the Federal Government. They knew also that the soldier settlers made a request to the Government that their tenure should be freehold, and during the last recess a deputation from the soldiers themselves waited on the Minister in that behalf, and he would like to know from the Minister what reply was received by the soldiers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The department convinced them that they were under the best conditions at present.

Mr. CORSER: The best conditions the Government would give them. Those people, as well as other perpetual lease settlers, would leave their farms to-day but for the fact that they knew the policy of the Country party was to make it possible for them to transfer their leaseholds into freeholds. He sincerely hoped the Secretary for Public Lands would take upon himself the duty he owed to the country and the settlers, of protecting them from being infested with fear from Crown lands, and that he would also take upon himself the duty he owed to the State of making land available under a tenure that would make the people peaceful and happy, and make them better citizens and thereby counteract the communistic tendencies of the Labour party.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): He wished to explain to the people who read "Hansard" and the newspapers that the perpetual lease system was absolutely the best.

Mr. EDWARDS: The soldiers do not say so.

Mr. BRENNAN: The soldiers had been misled, and he was quite prepared to go to any soldier settlement in Queensland and debate the question with the soldiers. Suppose a man had £1,000 in the bank and he wished to take up land. If he came along to the Government they would grant him a perpetual lease. On making application and getting the land on a perpetual lease basis, he would have to pay $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. rental on the capital value of that land. He would be getting $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. for his money in the bank, and he could spend that money in improving the land. He did not pay anything for the capital value of the land, and he paid no land tax at all. If he were to purchase a freehold, he would have to put the whole of his capital into the purchase price of the land and would have to borrow more money for improvements and pay, probably, 8 per cent. interest; whereas, if he used the money in the bank for improvements, under the perpetual lease system, he would have the land for the mere payment of the rental, and it would be just as secure a tenure as freehold, as he would have it for ninety-nine years, which meant for all time.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: What about reappraisements?

Mr. BRENNAN: The reappraisements would be every seven years. Land was only worth what it could produce. If a man paid £10 an acre for land and got into the hands of the bank, and he afterwards found the land was not worth keeping, the bank would exercise the power of a mortgagee and foreclose, and out he would go. But, if he took up that land under the perpetual lease tenure, and found, after investing his money in improvements, that the land was not worth it, what happened? The Government did not come along and say, "If you do not pay up, we will sell up your land and the improvements on it?"

Mr. WARREN: They do. There is a case in the Supreme Court now.

Mr. BRENNAN: A settler could forfeit his lease at any time and walk out. The incoming tenant had to pay the value of the improvements. In the case of the freeholds, the banks lent money on them and exercised their right as mortgagees, and, if the money

Mr. Brennan.]

was not paid up, the banks reserved the right to turn the borrower out on his ear. It was far better for a man to keep his capital and take up land under perpetual lease in preference to freehold, because he could use his capital to effect necessary improvements. What security did they get for a freehold? The idea of perpetual lease or freehold was only a myth, and, as the hon. member for Dalby would tell them, there was no difference between the two tenures.

Mr. CORSER: There must be some difference, because the banks will not lend money on perpetual lease.

Mr. BRENNAN: The reason for that was because the banks only wanted to play the game of pawnbroker all the time, whereas in the case of the perpetual lease, if one selector failed, the Government would put the land up to selection again.

Mr. CORSER: But the selector cannot get an advance on it.

Mr. BRENNAN: Under the freehold system the banks exercised the right of foreclosing at any time, even if the selector paid back in interest and redemption more than the original amount borrowed. After all, what did freehold mean? If a man got the freehold of a piece of land, there was nothing to stop another man from mining on that land and taking the metals from under the surface under the Mining or Private Property Act. Under the Rights in Water Act, the water beneath that land belonged to the Crown and did not belong to the individual who owned the freehold. Hon. members opposite were always barracking for the banks and big capitalists. Freehold was a good thing for the banks, but it was no good for the individual. It would be far better for a man with money to take up a perpetual lease, put his money into the Savings Bank at $\frac{3}{2}$ per cent., and spend it on improving his property. Under the freehold system, a settler was compelled to borrow money from the bank to improve his property, and immediately he started to borrow the bank became his master.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The banks evidently think that freehold is the better tenure.

Mr. BRENNAN: Of course, they did, because it was a banking swindle on the farmer all the time. It was far better to spend the capital on improvements instead of borrowing money to buy freehold.

Mr. CORSER: Your argument is good up to the first reappraisement.

Mr. BRENNAN: He was glad the hon. member admitted that much, because, when he met the hon. gentleman on the platform, he was going to tell the farmers and soldiers that the hon. member for Burnett admitted that his argument was good up to the first reappraisement.

Mr. CORSER: I did not say that your argument was good; but up to the first reappraisement the argument in favour of a perpetual lease is good.

Mr. BRENNAN considered that he had put up a good argument in favour of perpetual lease. That brought him to his second point—the land was only worth what it could produce, and nothing more. If it could be proved that the land could not produce as much as its capital value, then the value of the perpetual lease would be reduced.

Mr. CORSER: Who is to say that it is less than the capital value?

[Mr. Brennan.

Mr. BRENNAN: That was fixed by the Act. If the land was proved to be more valuable than the capital value, then the value of the perpetual lease would be increased.

Mr. CORSER: Who is to decide that?

Mr. BRENNAN: The court. Whom could they get fairer than the Land Court? After the first seven years a man holding a perpetual lease could say he had paid so much for income tax. He would pay no land tax under perpetual lease, and he would show what the value of his land was worth. In that way they could get the true value of the land according to what it produced. Hon. members opposite should tell the soldiers the truth about the perpetual lease-hold tenure.

Regarding the prickly-pear leases, they knew that the prickly-pear had taken a good hold of the State, and caused the Government a good deal of anxiety. He had had occasion to interview the Minister regarding the destruction of prickly-pear, and he learned that, although the Under Secretary and his staff were very strict regarding the performance of prickly-pear conditions, they pointed out that it was almost an impossibility to fulfil the conditions laid down by the Act. It would mean that a man would have to become a slave to keep his land free from prickly-pear. They could never get rid of prickly-pear by putting on gangs of men. The only way to clear it was to have close settlement. He remembered, when their friends opposite and their supporters put the Germans on the dense prickly-pear scrub at Glencoe, they had to cut their way out of it. By the time they cleared all the pear the undertaker came and took them away. The supporters of hon. members opposite gave Tyson the big rolling plains, but they put the small man right out in the scrub, and left him to hoe his way out. That happened in different parts of Queensland. Many of the farmers on the Darling Downs had areas of land which were too big for them to work. They would not conserve any fodder, and, when anyone gave them advice, he was laughed at.

Mr. BRAND: What is the area of their average holdings?

Mr. BRENNAN: Around Warwick there were places held by farmers in blocks of 700 to 900 acres each. They were fenced with barbed wire, which was broken down in places. There were acres of black chocolate soil.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Black chocolate?

Mr. BRENNAN: Yes, black chocolate. (Opposition laughter.) It was the finest soil they could get, between red and black in colour, yet the farmers there held big areas that they did not work because they wanted to run stock on them. The solution was for the Lands Department to cut up the holdings into small areas. At Mount Hutton the areas were cut up, and 95 per cent. of the soldier settlers there were successful, because they ran their farms on scientific lines. (Opposition laughter.) He was told so by the manager.

Mr. MORGAN: Then he told you wrong.

Mr. BRENNAN: Well, they would read it in the Press, and let them say then that he

(Mr. Brennan) was wrong. Those [3.30 p.m.] were matters the department should look into. They were too fond of giving away big areas. In some

cases they had to do it, but where the land was rich the areas should be limited. By placing men on smaller areas they would prevent the spread of prickly-pear.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Taking all tenures into consideration, at present there was less land for which rent was being paid than there was six or seven years ago. Many people thought there was a scarcity of land in Queensland. That was not so. Millions of acres, unfortunately, were not settled in any shape or form. One of the reasons why the lands were not being settled was that the department was pursuing a false policy of looking upon the lands as something from which a large revenue should be obtained for use in other directions. That was a huge mistake. Revenue should not be obtained directly from the land by way of land rental. Indirectly, land settlement would mean greater income tax collections, larger revenue from freights and fares, and revenue in numerous other directions. Unfortunately, the Government were taking the revenue directly out of the land by means of huge rentals and the exorbitant prices that were placed upon the land. A fact which was to be deplored was that so much country was being held at present under occupation license. Land which previously was held under prickly-pear selection and other forms of tenure now was coming under occupation license. The occupation license did not provide for the destruction of noxious weeds, pear, or pests of any description, and it was a favoured form of tenure.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is taken up under occupation license only as a last resort.

Mr. MORGAN: He knew that. The Financial Statement and the Governor's Speech showed the large amount of land held under occupation license. The Minister was perfectly correct in stating it was taken up under that tenure as a last resort. That was a clear indication that the lands were becoming infested with noxious weeds, and were useless. It could not be said that the lands of Queensland generally were nearly as productive as they were some years ago. With the exception of favoured areas, the country was becoming overrun with suckers, burr, prickly-pear, and weeds generally. The people were not keeping their lands in as good condition as they had done ten or twelve years ago.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: How do you account for that?

Mr. MORGAN: The cost of keeping the land clear had become so great.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In other words, you think wages are too high?

Mr. MORGAN: In one respect that was so. The amount of money a man could make was not sufficient to enable him to employ labour. It was no good burking the question; they had to look the facts in the face. The lessees could not afford to pay for the labour necessary, and make a profit out of the land. They followed the practice of all other business people when they discovered that their revenue was not sufficient to make a living—they looked round for a form of retrenchment. Rental had been increased enormously year by year, and there was only one way in which a man could retrench—by reducing the number of hands he employed upon his property. That was what was occurring every day. If they went to any station

in Queensland, they would find that, where formerly as many as fifteen men had been employed all the time doing nothing but destroying pests, to-day not a man was employed.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That has only taken place since the slump in the prices of wool and cattle.

Mr. MORGAN: That was one reason. If cattle and wool were selling at high prices—

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: As they were a few months ago.

Mr. MORGAN: They could employ the labour to a certain extent. At present that was not the case. There was not only one reason to account for the position. Wages had gone up from £1 10s. per week in 1914 to £3 7s. per week at the present time.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Cattle and wool went up in greater proportion.

Mr. MORGAN: For those who were fortunate enough to have them. Some portions of the country, more especially the south-western portion, were drought-stricken at the time high values prevailed, and they could not take advantage of them. What was the good of cattle fetching £3 per 100 lb. at the Enoggera yards when they had not the cattle to sell?

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

Mr. MORGAN: He was giving reasons why the land was becoming less productive than it was some years ago. In 1915 421,102 square miles were held under pastoral lease and occupation license. In 1920 the area was 379,811 square miles—a decrease of 41,291 square miles. They had been led to believe that there was so much money in the grazing industry that people were absolutely tumbling over one another to get into it. Yet those figures showed that at the end of 1920 there were 41,291 square miles under pastoral lease and occupation license less than in 1914.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Were there not resumptions during the year?

Mr. MORGAN: There might have been resumptions, but, taking every form of tenure under the Land Acts, there were 332,000,000 acres in occupation in 1915, and 325,000,000 acres in 1920, or a reduction of 7,000,000 acres in round figures.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What are you quoting from?

Mr. MORGAN: He was quoting from the reports of the Under Secretary for Public Lands, from which he took the following figures:—

Tenure.	1915.	1920.
Pastoral lease ...	223,000,000	209,000,000
Occupation license...	45,000,000	33,000,000
Grazing and scrub selection ...	62,000,000	79,000,000
Perpetual lease ...	112,000	2,694,000
Auction perpetual lease ...	9,135	—
Special lease ...	150,000	218,000
Mining lease ...	267,000	342,000

or a decrease of 6,971,000 acres, which, in his opinion, disclosed a deplorable state of affairs.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What became of those lands?

Mr. MORGAN: They were not being occupied. If he forfeited one of his occupation licenses, the land perhaps remained

Mr. Morgan.]

unoccupied for a time, although thrown open for selection, simply because there might be a good season, and nobody wanted it. One of the reasons for that state of affairs was that the Government were endeavouring to squeeze too much rent from the people. The time would come when they would have to reduce rents. Personally, he was in favour of reducing rents.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member should deal with that on a later vote.

Mr. MORGAN: He thought he could deal with the whole matter in one speech. The prickly-pear question concerned him, as well as every other man in Queensland, because, if things went on as they had been going for the last fifty years—he was not blaming the present Government more than any other Government—in another fifty years there would be scarcely an acre of grazing land in Queensland free from prickly-pear. The Minister stated that vigorous action had been taken to clear land at Blackall, but that was only one of scores of areas in which it was spreading. In the Minister's own electorate, at Charleville and elsewhere, it was miles further north than it was five or six years ago. Perhaps the land rangers themselves did not know it was there. Every bird in the bush now was eating pear. A crow might be here one moment feeding on a dead carcass and in a few hours it might be 50 miles away, feeding on another carcass and distributing pear seed all round. The pear was not being spread by a gradual process; it was spreading in jumps of 50 and 100 miles. A person might buy 200 or 300 head of stock at Chinchilla, which had been feeding on prickly-pear, and he might rail them to Charleville or Cheepie, or some place where there had been no pear for miles round, and in a few days those cattle would be spreading pear over the whole of that country. They were actually carting it in the trains. It was a deplorable thing, and the Government were doing nothing to grapple with it. He would have a separate board to deal with prickly-pear lands. He would give them away. It would not be a matter of quibbling over a pound or so. He would give away the land, provided only that the people would live on it, more especially along the railways. Right up against the cities and towns and railways they had millions of acres of first-class land with dense prickly-pear upon it. Why could they not recognise that that land was lost to Queensland at present, and let the people have it in living areas, provided only they resided upon it—no rental, no charge whatever. In some cases it would be necessary even to give them some assistance. If it was a proper thing to borrow millions to build railways to open up the country, would it not be better to borrow millions to settle land already provided with railways? If they were going to put 1,000 people on the land, it was only a minor matter whether they put them where there was a railway or whether they had to build a railway to serve them. At the present moment pear-infested land along their railways was a lost province, but they would have it once again if they cleared it of prickly-pear. Unfortunately the Government had a hard-and-fast rule that all land selected now must be held under perpetual lease. That was undoubtedly a mistake.

At 3.50 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

[Mr. Morgan.]

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Will you tell me what advantage there would be in giving a freehold?

Mr. MORGAN: When a man put his bit of money and his work into a freehold he was improving something for himself; but under the perpetual lease system he was improving something that would eventually belong to the Government.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No.

Mr. MORGAN: It would belong to the Government eventually, and that man would be taxed because of the fact that he had improved it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know that is not true.

Mr. MORGAN: For the first fifteen years a man would have it for nothing. Then a reappraisal by the Land Court would take place, and the person making the reappraisal would know nothing of the conditions that existed fifteen years before. That land was dealt with by the Land Court, and a rental value placed upon it. It was only human nature that when a thing did not belong to a person that person took out all he could and put as little back in return.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It does belong to the leaseholder.

Mr. FORDE: You do not understand the principle of leasehold.

Mr. MORGAN: He understood a great deal more about it than the hon. member.

Mr. FORDE: You are trying to mislead the Committee by saying that the land belongs to the Government and that it does not belong to the man. It is a lease in perpetuity.

Mr. MORGAN: For ninety-nine years.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: At the end of the time he puts on his hat and walks out. (Laughter.)

Mr. MORGAN: Supposing a man took up a prickly-pear selection and fulfilled the conditions, it would become his own, and if a railway was built and eventually a town sprang up, the man with the freehold land could divide his holding into small areas and sell them and get the benefit, while the perpetual leaseholder could not.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: That is holding land for speculation—not for production.

Mr. MORGAN: Did the hon. member object to that? The Government were preventing a man from getting the value that he himself had created.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The State creates the value.

Mr. MORGAN: In the first instance the man created the value by going into the wilderness and being prepared to sacrifice himself, his wife, and his family in the selection of that land, and for a number of years practically living on the smell of an oil rag. That man demonstrated to the rest of the people in Queensland that the land could grow something which they never thought before it was capable of growing. He had demonstrated its value where they originally thought it had no value. He had demonstrated by his hard work and the work of his wife and family, that the land was suitable for growing maize or for mixed farming; yet hon. members would deprive him of the results of his work. Was it any wonder that the people were not going on to the land and that the city people were

not sending their sons into the country? Hon. members knew that the brainy boys and girls were leaving the country and coming into the cities and towns. He supposed that his own sons and daughters would like to do the same. If the conditions were such that they were preventing the best of their people going on the land, was it not time they found out something new? Must they not realise that the present system was a failure? The policy adopted was, "There is the land; if you don't like it, you can lump it. If you like it, you can have it." There should be an attractive land policy and something that would entice city merchants to send their sons, after they were educated, into the country. He, as the father of a boy, would sooner have him working on the land, recognising that his future would be better than if he obtained a Government position, but most people were endeavouring to get their sons and daughters into Government positions.

Mr. PEASE: Many merchants are sending their sons on to the land. Take Samuel Allen and Sons, of Townsville, who are the most successful merchants in North Queensland—all their sons are on the land.

Mr. MORGAN: A few merchants and business men sent their sons on the land after they were educated, but the merchants' businesses or the doctors' professions were so remunerative that they kept the land; the land did not keep the sons. It was only a matter of a few years when the sons came back to the city. He could give many cases where the sons of big merchants in Brisbane went on to selections in his own electorate, and were back again in their fathers' businesses after five or ten years, as they could not make the land pay.

Mr. PEASE: The son of the hon. member for Oxley is on the land at Bowen. That proves that your argument is rotten.

Mr. MORGAN: One swallow does not make a summer.

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

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): The remarks of the hon. member for Murilla gave the whole show away so far as barracking for freehold was concerned. He was sorry the hon. member did give the show away, because he (Mr. Cooper) was a little bit with him in the matter of freehold. He wanted to know why he should be forced to part with any little bit of freehold or any interest in freehold that he had. As a resident taxpayer and citizen of this State he was interested in the land that belong to them. He wanted the hon. member for Murilla to remember that he was a freeholder with him (Mr. Cooper) and a large number of other people, in the land of the State which had not already been alienated. Why should they alienate the lands of the State and allow anybody else to take away the land that they absolutely owned? It was their land, and he thought they should keep it. They should do what other big landowners did—let it out to the people who wanted to hire it from them. He did not see why they should be forced to part with the control of freehold for themselves as a State. If it was good for the individual to have freehold land, how much better was it for the State to have freehold land? The people of the State, as a body, gave the increased value to the land, and for that very reason they should hold on to it, so that it might be theirs and so that any increase should come to them. From

time immemorial, "The earth was the Lord's and the fulness thereof." They were the lords; they were the masters of the situation. They owned the land, therefore let them have all that was coming to them. Of course, that was a selfish argument. This matter could be looked at from two aspects. One was the selfish aspect, and the other the aspect of the general prosperity of the State. Hon. members opposite believed in private gain and in profit, and believed that they should take every opportunity of turning things to their own advantage. It was quite natural for them to barrack for the freehold of land. Not that they could get any more from the land—because whether land was held under freehold or under leasehold tenure, it did not make that land one bit more productive—but they wanted freehold because it would give them something to juggle with—something to play with—something to barter with—something to buy and sell. Their whole life was bound up in buying and selling, in buying the good things for themselves and selling what they did not require. For that reason, they should hold strictly

[4 p.m.] to their policy of leasehold.

There were other aspects of the leasehold question that must be considered. There had been no policy which had enabled settlement to take place so quickly as the leasehold policy. He would remind the hon. member for Murilla, who talked about driving people into the cities, that there were 7,000,000 people in London, and millions of people in New York, Cincinnati, and other American cities. Berlin had a big population, and other big cities on the Continent had been built up by the forcing of people into the cities, because there was no land available for them. Why was there no land available for them? It was because the freehold land was held by people who would not part with it.

Mr. MORGAN: Why is it that we are driving them into the cities?

Mr. F. A. COOPER: They were not driving them into the cities as fast as they were in the other parts of the Commonwealth, where there was no leasehold. The hon. member was driven off the land in Victoria, and could not get a footing in his own city of Melbourne, and he had to come to Queensland, where he could get leasehold and make a good living.

Mr. MORGAN: That is not true. I had 1,500 acres of land when I lived in Victoria. I sold it when I came here.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He apologised to the hon. member for having misrepresented his position. How much better off was the hon. member in a State like this than in the State where he had freehold? He wished to draw the attention of those who were talking about the cost of settling people on the land to the remarks Sir Joseph Cook made in Sydney the other day, when he said that it was costing up to £3,200 to settle one soldier on the land in the Southern States. It was not costing that amount in Queensland, for the reason that there were no initial expenses in the matter of purchasing land.

Mr. MORGAN: Look what they have done for the soldiers in Victoria! Go to Mildura and see for yourself.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He had been over there. He had lived in Victoria, and he had been driven out, like the hon. member for Murilla; but he did not defame the State he came to, like the hon. member.

Mr. F. A. Cooper.]

Mr. MORGAN: I do not. I would like to see Queensland prosper. I would like to see thousands of Victorians coming here like they did in 1908.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He knew two men in Ipswich who wanted to go into business. They each had £1,000, but held different views. One man said, "I am going to use my £1,000 to stock up a shop which I can rent, and start business at the first opportunity," and the other man said, "I am going to buy my own shop, and then stock up afterwards." The man who had the £1,000 and rented a shop, and stocked his shop with £800 worth of goods holding £200 in hand, was to-day a fairly wealthy man, while the other man was slaving at his trade to save the £3,000 required for the freehold of the shop, so that the landlord would not be able to push him out on his "nut."

Mr. MORGAN: That applies to repurchased estates, under which thirty or forty years are given for payment of the purchase money. They do not want any more money to make a start there than under the leasehold system.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: He was dealing with the possibility of the man who had a little capital going on a leasehold, and expending the bulk of his capital in stocking up and getting an immediate return. The mere holding of the deed could not make land more productive; the land was only worth what it would produce, and that was what land should be for—for production and not for speculation, as hon. members opposite desired. The great desire of those hon. members was to have land so that they might traffic in it. What they needed to cut out above all things was trafficking in land. By the perpetual lease system the Labour Government were making land productive by putting it to the very best use and getting as many people on it as possible.

Mr. FORDE (*Rockhampton*): After listening to hon. members opposite, it appeared to him that they either had not a good knowledge of the subject on which they had been speaking or were endeavouring to mislead the people of Queensland. The hon. member for Murilla blamed the present Government for not treating the soldiers properly.

Mr. MORGAN: I never mentioned the soldiers.

Mr. FORDE: Perhaps he was wrong—the hon. member for Burnett did. That hon. member definitely said that the Government were not doing a fair thing by the soldiers. He would quote what the leader of the Nationalist party said in regard to the Government's treatment of returned soldiers—

"As everyone knew, he was not a supporter of the present Government, but he would say without fear of contradiction that there was no Government in Australia which had treated the soldiers more fairly than the present Queensland Government. He would say again that the Labour Government of Queensland had treated the soldiers fairer and squarer than any other Government in Australia."

The hon. member for Windsor, when giving evidence at an inquiry by a committee into the question of erecting canning works at Beerburrum, said in reply to Mr. Ashton—

"I think that to sit down and listen to Mr. Ashton's remarks on the present Government, without replying, I would be a coward and would be ashamed of

myself. . . . The Government has provided for the welfare of the men here, and has given them all the assistance in their power."

He thought the hon. member for Murilla really endorsed the statement of the leader of the Nationalist party.

Mr. MORGAN: Not at all! I disagree with his remarks.

Mr. FORDE: He believed in giving credit where credit was due, and he thought that the Government were doing more for returned soldiers than any other Government in Australia. They had heard a great deal from the hon. member for Murilla about the leasehold system being no good for the men on the land, and of men being driven into the cities because of the dreadful leasehold tenure. He would quote from the "Producers' Review" of 10th March, 1921, which styled itself "The Official Organ of the Queensland Farmers' Union and the United Cane Growers' Association." Would the hon. member for Murilla repudiate the Queensland Farmers' Union? No! The hon. member for Pittsworth was also listening to him.

Mr. MORGAN: I certainly repudiate that paper, because it is a Labour paper.

Mr. FORDE: Hon. members opposite knew that the "Producers' Review" was the official organ of the Farmers' Union and the United Cane Growers' Association, and they knew that the hon. member for Murilla had to toe the mark when the whip was cracked in caucus, and he probably would be called to account for criticising the "Producers' Review." This was what the "Producers' Review" said—

"There was never, in the history of the Commonwealth, a more recklessly unsound policy than that of selling the Crown lands. The policy still has its supporters, but the bulk of the people, we believe, both Nationalist and Labour alike, are opposed to it as a means of enabling chronically unfinancial Governments to raise revenue."

Further on it said—

"The system (perpetual lease) appealed strongly to the Labour party, which made it a plank of its platform, opposed by politicians who thought more of getting revenue than of the future of the State, and opposed by those who did not stop to think what it meant, but decided that, as it emanated through the Labour party, it must be 'rotten.'"

That was the case with the hon. member for Murilla. Because the leasehold system had emanated from the Labour party he could see no good in it; he could not rise above petty party politics. That article was written clearly on behalf of the small landholder, and not on behalf of the land jobber or the land shark. The "Producers' Review" went on—

"The system has its disadvantages. It deprives the State of a revenue that it used to get by selling land; but that is likely to appeal to the politician more than to the small landowner."

"At first there was another serious difficulty, which, however, can be overcome. It was that banks did not like advancing money against perpetual leases, because their value as security had not been established. The leasehold, however, is now accepted as security, so that need no longer be regarded as a serious barrier."

[Mr. F. A. Cooper.

"The perpetual lease system, on the other hand, has very great advantages, not the least of which is its security from heavy land tax. The land is held for all time by the State, but the occupier has practically an unlimited tenure, and pays a rental which may be increased periodically as the land becomes more available by reason of townships or railways. Thus the State always has a steady income from rentals, and, above all, it reserves to the people the unearned increment or the profit that belongs to the people, and which has been gained, not by the landowner, but by the whole community. The farmer benefits in that he has not to spend his capital on purchase money, but can devote it to improvements, plant, and machinery. The rental, especially for the first fifteen years, is very small, and the land is exempt from the land tax. So long as the rent is paid regularly the farmer is just as secure as if he owned the land; in fact he is more secure, because he cannot be crushed out by a land-jobber. He has the right of appeal against the rental, and can transfer, mortgage, or sublet with the approval of the Minister.

"Practically every great political economist in the Commonwealth now admits that perpetual lease, as a national policy, would have been the ideal one for land settlement if it had been adopted in the early days. Had that policy been pursued a hundred years ago, Australia would now be the lightest-taxed nation in the world, because of the great revenues that would be received for city and town lands and for lands along railways, instead of which the unearned increment has been won by private people, and not by the first purchasers, but by speculators. In 1916 the National party in Parliament made a great outcry against the system, declaring that it meant ruination, and threatening to wipe it out as soon as that party was returned to power. But perpetual lease is here to stay, at least as an optional tenure. No party that had a scrap of interest in the future welfare of the country would dream of abolishing the system entirely; in fact, the most they threaten now is to make leasehold an optional tenure. By doing that it would give the selector his option to take up leasehold or freehold as he wished; but it would lead to confusion which subsequent legislators would have good reason to curse, and which the people of a century hence would have better reason to condemn as against the best interest of the country."

Just the same as in every other reform. A majority of the people recognised that the Labour party's reforms were good, and hon. members opposite dared not turn them down after they had been enacted. Continuing, the article said—

"Unearned increment is the curse of civilisation in the older countries, and farsighted politicians ought to do whatever is possible to block its introduction into Australia. It can be blocked (excepting for the errors of the past) by leasehold in land tenure, and that principle may yet become the principal tenure throughout the Commonwealth. It is the one thing that will block unscrupulous Governments in need of money from

selling the people's asset in a reckless manner, and it is the one thing that will effectively block the bottling up of land for purely speculative purposes."

That was a very fine article. He had not met the editor of the "Producers' Review," but he must be a very intelligent man. At any rate, he had the courage of his convictions, and was sufficiently big to rise above the realms of party politics and to publish a statesman-like explanation of such an important principle. He was very sound on economics, and he (Mr. Forde) hoped the party opposite would give him an increase in salary, because he was doing very good work. With regard to perpetual leases and leaseholds generally, one would think that they had not been tried in Queensland, or that they had been tried and had proved a failure. Hon. members opposite forgot that for many years in Queensland many of the big pastoral holdings had been held under the leasehold system, and the men who held those leasehold properties had made a good deal of money out of them. It was the men who got in Parliament and who came from the old Nationalist party, and who were really not Country party representatives at all, who got up on behalf of the land-jobber or the land shark and wanted to do away with leaseholds in order to give the land speculators a "fair go." The largest area that could be acquired by any one person under the perpetual lease system was 2,560 acres. He had gone into the question of perpetual leases, and from his study of the subject, he thought it had come to stay. It was a good system. He found that land was available for selection in Queensland under the following modes and classes—

"Agricultural selection—i.e., perpetual lease selections.

"Grazing selections—i.e., grazing homesteads and grazing farms.

"Perpetual lease, prickly-pear selections."

Let them glance at the position of a selector of a perpetual lease selection. His yearly rent for the first fifteen years of the term would amount to the very modest sum of 1½ per cent. of the capital value. A reassessment every fifteen years would be made by an independent Land Court, and such court would not be able to increase the rent where such increase was attributable to improvements made by the lessee. When a selector fenced, or otherwise improved his land, as required by the statute, he became entitled to his lease, which was in perpetuity. Several High Court judges had stated that perpetual leasehold was equivalent to a freehold tenure. The perpetual lease system was the best, for the following reasons:—

(a) A much smaller rent was paid;

(b) A much speedier achievement of his best tenure;

(c) None of his capital was required to be used save in improvements;

(d) It made for bonâ fide settlement, and it cut out the land-jobber."

Freehold, they were told, was a grant of land issued to a man and his heirs and assigns—that was, the Crown had parted with its ownership, so long as the chain of owners lasted. Now, was not that precisely what a perpetual lease was? A perpetual lease was a grant by the Crown for all time to a man and his successors in title. If a man's desire was to have an area of land to himself on which

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to earn an honest living and bring up a family, he would more readily obtain his object under the perpetual lease system. He would give a concrete case of each mode of tenure. A had a perpetual lease selection of a capital value of £100. He paid his first year's rent, amounting to £1 10s., got his license to occupy, and fenced or otherwise improved the holding. That could be done within six months of the date he applied for the land. Consider the selector of an agricultural farm! B selected under agricultural farm conditions a portion similar to A, with a purchasing price of £100. His annual rent amounted to 1/40th of the price or, in this instance, £2 10s. per annum, as against £1 10s. that A was paying. Like A, he could get his lease as soon as he had fenced his land, but with this important difference: A's perpetual lease was to all intents and purposes a freehold title. B's lease of his agricultural farm was for twenty years. For five years he must pay £2 10s. per annum rent, and then, on the payment of a further £62 18s. 2d. and the necessary fees, he would get his deed of grant in fee-simple. Should he let his lease run out, which a good number of selectors had done, he would pay an annual rent of £2 10s. during the whole term, and twelve months later he must pay £50, or be in danger of losing all his payments. A had by far the better bargain of the two, because he never touched his capital, save to improve his holding; whereas B must need to dip fairly heavily into his purse before he could get his title. A's rent was insignificant in comparison with B's. B's rent would really be heavier in proportion to A's than the illustration just given showed, because A paid on the capital value of the land, whereas B paid 2½ per cent. on the purchasing price, which usually was fixed at a higher rate than the capital value. The genuine farmer—that was the man who wanted to make his home and living on the land—did not mind occupying the land which he leased. The perpetual lease tenure was obnoxious to the speculator in land, and also to members opposite, who were not *bonâ fide* representatives of the struggling selectors. The perpetual lease provided occupation conditions. That interfered with the business of the speculator. The Labour party did not profess to legislate in favour of speculators of land. The natural enemy to the genuine farmer was the land speculator. The land speculators fastened themselves on to the so-called Country party, and in many cases got into Parliament on its back. Hence it was no wonder that the "Producers' Review" said of the Country party—

"The Country party in Queensland is not independent, but it is controlled and led by ex-Nationalists, and the organisation is controlled by men who recently fought tooth and nail to link up with the Nationalists. They even fought the last Federal election as a Nationalist-controlled committee. That the funds which supported the Country party in Queensland at the last State elections also supported the Nationalists."

The so-called Country party had a lawyer as a leader. The present leader was the hon. member for Dalby, who was formerly leader of the Nationalist party. The leader in the Federal sphere is a respectable doctor. The Country party also included the hon. member for Murilla, who for years was a member of the Nationalist party, the hon. member for Burnett, and other hon. members, all of

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whom emanated from the Nationalist party. He was reminded by the Secretary for Railways that the two parties held a combined meeting that morning—aye, a combined caucus. They would not tell that to the farmers in Keppel, or Lockyer, or Murilla. Hon. members opposite did not like the facts he gave them; but they were facts all the same, and the electors of Queensland would endorse the perpetual lease system on the next occasion by returning the Labour party to power.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): He congratulated the hon. member for Rockhampton on his able speech, although the hon. member got quite out of his depth. (Laughter.) The freehold was an important thing from the Country party's point of view. They heard a lot about "a million farms for a million farmers!" That was a big proposition, and he was sorry the Government did not respond by helping those people who took such a keen interest in the State. Something must be done to fill the waste spaces in Queensland. One of the great questions was land settlement. There was an immense amount of land-jobbing going on in the State which should be stopped. He believed in *bonâ fide* settlement, but he thought the land was being over-capitalised. Hon. members opposite talked about going in for perpetual lease, yet a considerable number of members of the Government party had taken up freehold in his electorate. He did not blame them for doing that, because it showed that they adopted a sane policy in purchasing the land right out. He believed there was only one member on the Government side who took up land under perpetual lease, and he had got a burden round his neck which he would have liked to turn into freehold. The perpetual lease had been proved to be a complete failure. Not only was it a failure, but it was unattractive. It was a fallacy to say that a perpetual lease was cheap. It was just as cheap to take up land under the freehold principle. It was easier for a man to be financed when he held the freehold. When a man was game to go on the land, and was prepared to bury himself in the bush, he should receive every encouragement, and it would be better to give him a freehold in preference to a perpetual lease.

At 4.30 p.m.,

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

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for a later hour of the sitting.

QUESTIONS.

MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF MILL GROCERY SUGARS.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. Has he taken steps to carry into effect the following resolution passed by this House on 1st September last:—

That, as it is necessary that there be brought into operation means for reducing the cost of production and distribution and facilitating the transmission of our products from the producer to the consumer, it is desirable that the

Government of Queensland ask the co-operation of the Commonwealth in the appointment of a Royal Commission for the purpose of taking evidence and reporting as to the prospects of success in the placing of mill grocery sugars directly in the hands of the retailers?

"2. If so, what are they?

"3. Would not the Central Cane Prices Board, either with its present personnel or with additions thereto, if clothed with the powers of a Royal Commission, be a suitable body to carry out the duties laid down in the resolution?"

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

"1, 2, and 3. During the past year the Government have obtained reports and opinions from a number of sugar experts whom it was thought were competent to advise on the matter of manufacturing and marketing of mill whites. It is expected that the Government will be able to further consider this important question after the session ends."

AGREEMENT FOR MANAGEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BANKING AND LOAN BUSINESS.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*) asked the Treasurer—

"1. Has any agreement, oral or otherwise, been entered into with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia to hand over to that institution the general banking business of the State in Australia, London, and abroad, including the flotation of State loans and the payment of interest thereon, and the repayment of principal in accordance with clause 19 of the schedule to the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920?

"2. If so, is provision contained therein whereby the interest on the Queensland public debt, payable in London, will be arranged through or by the agency of the Commonwealth Bank?

"3. What amounts, and on what date is it necessary to make interest payments in London during the twelve months ending 31st December, 1921?

"4. What amount was at credit of the State and available in London for such interest payments on the 30th June, 1921?

"5. Is it proposed to transmit remittances direct from America or from Queensland when required in this connection?"

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

"1 and 2. I would refer the hon. member to the reports under the Government Inscribed Stock Act of 1920 and the Queensland Stock Inscription Act of 1883, which have recently been laid on the table of the House.

"3.—	£	s.	d.
1st January, 1921	489,157	0	8
1st February, 1921	93,468	15	0
1st March, 1921	3,044	5	0
1st April, 1921	421,398	0	0
1st June, 1921	115,156	5	0
6th June, 1921	16,118	19	4
1st July, 1921	502,637	19	11
1st August, 1921	93,468	15	0
1st October, 1921	434,743	6	4
1st December, 1921	115,156	5	0

"4. The information is contained in the Auditor-General's report.

"5. Yes."

CATTLE DIP AT PRAIRIE, NORTHERN RAILWAY.

Mr. JONES (*Kennedy*) asked the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock—

"1. What was the cost of the erection of the cattle dip at Prairie, on the Northern line?

"2. What number of stock have been dipped at Prairie from its erection up to the 30th June, 1921?"

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

"1. £1,024.

"2. 40,000 head of stock more or less. The local people were asked and refused to build a dip for themselves. I would also remind the hon. member, as a new member in this House, that this dip is not in his electorate, and the member for the district is fully alive to all the requirements."

Mr. JONES: It does not seem like it, anyway.

LOAN EXPENDITURE, IPSWICH RAILWAY WORKSHOPS.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warrick*) asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What amount of loan money was expended upon or at the Ipswich workshops during financial year ended 30th June, 1921?

"2. What were the chief items upon which the amount was expended?

"3. What amount was expended at the Ipswich workshops from revenue during financial year ended 30th June, 1921?

"4. What is the total average daily number of men employed at the Ipswich workshops?"

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

"1. £435,000.

"2. Construction of new locomotives, carriages, wagons, also installation of new machinery and plant, stores and material manufactured for stock, etc.

"3. £425,788. The average for the year 1920-1921 was 1,801 men in the workshops."

CONVERSION OF TREASURY BILLS INTO BONDS OR STOCK.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE (*Oxley*) asked the Treasurer—

"In the event of all holders of Treasury bills maturing in January next, amounting to £1,124,750, agreeing to convert them into bonds or stock on terms now being offered by the Treasurer, what will be the further annual drain on consolidated revenue, taking into consideration both increased interest and the bonus, and upon the assumption that they will be redeemed at 31st January, 1931?"

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

"The simple arithmetical calculation should not be beyond the capacity of the hon. member, and to assist him I would direct attention to the fact that, owing to the business acumen displayed by the

Government in the negotiations for the transfer of the Savings Bank, £411,850 of the Treasury bills will be renewed for twenty-five years at an interest rate of $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per annum."

EXPENDITURE ON BOWEN COALFIELD RAILWAY.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE asked the Secretary for Railways—

"1. What was the original estimated cost of the Bowen Coalfield Railway?"

"2. What has been expended upon it to date?"

"3. What further expenditure is it anticipated will be required to complete this railway?"

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

"1. The original estimate in 1915 was £392,394.

"2. £431,000.

"3. £200,000. The increase is due to higher cost of labour and the great increase in the cost of materials since 1915."

ASSISTANCE BY STATE GOVERNMENT TO SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

Mr. WILSON (*Fortitude Valley*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Public Lands—

"So much having been said in regard to soldier settlement, will the Minister tell the House what this Government have done generally in regard to soldier settlement?"

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrago*) replied—

"The assistance rendered by the Queensland Government to soldier settlement may be summarised thus—

1. Crown lands available as perpetual lease selections, town and suburban lands as perpetual and suburban leases.

2. No deposit lodged with application.

3. No rent or survey fee payable during first three years.

4. Advances at £1 for £1 made up to £625—term of advance, forty years. During first seven years simple interest only charged; rate of interest $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. first year, 4 per cent. second year, $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. third year, and 5 per cent. each succeeding year. Special advances for live stock, fruit trees, pineapple suckers, and banana suckers, £170; term of advance, ten years. Vehicles, harness, machinery, etc., £50; term of repayment, ten years. Tools of trade, £10; term of repayment, five years. Further advance at 15s. in the £1 up to £575; term of repayment, twenty-five years. Rate of interest, 5 per cent. Making total advances available £1,200.

5. Twenty-six group settlements under the control of supervisors and instructors have been established, while smaller areas in various districts have also been allotted to soldiers. Soldiers have also been assisted to purchase improved farms.

6. The number of soldiers settled on the land is 4,611.

7. 753,042 acres of Crown lands have been selected.

8. 29,151 acres are available for selection.

9. 27,761 acres are designed, but not advertised.

10. 48,485 acres have been set aside for soldier settlement.

11. 612 soldiers have been provided with homes in suburban areas.

12. The total amount advanced and expended by the Queensland Government in connection with land settlement purposes and the purchase of homes is £2,556,453.

13. Fertilisers to the extent of £12,000 have been granted to settlers.

14. Maintenance to the extent of £17,793 has been paid to the settlers.

15. Stores, shops, halls, and boarding-houses have been erected and established for the convenience and comfort of soldiers on group settlements.

16. Training farms were established and factories erected for the treatment of soldiers' products.

17. Road works and railway construction to make lands available for soldier settlement have been carried out costing £261,619.

18. Railway concessions amounting to £251,463 have been granted in connection with war work and repatriation.

19. Fifty-four widows have been granted Anzac cottages; rental, 1s. 6d. per week; cost of erection, £21,555.

20. 1,035 soldiers have been assisted through the Maimed and Wounded Soldiers' Fund, the amount granted being £28,072.

21. Furniture to the amount of £17,000 has been gifted to soldiers on the land."

CORRESPONDENCE RELATING TO LIGHT AT THURSDAY ISLAND.

The TREASURER: During the morning sitting the hon. member for Townsville referred to the need for a light at Thursday Island, and I stated that the hon. member for Cook had already brought the matter under my notice. As the leader of the Opposition did not appear to believe that the hon. member for Cook had brought the matter under my notice, I said that I would lay the correspondence on the table, and I now do so.

Papers laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I ask leave to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the hon. member for Port Curtis be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear hear!

Mr. FLETCHER: The Secretary for Railways, when speaking on the Railway Estimates ("Hansard," page 1516), quoted some extracts from a speech made by myself ("Hansard," page 1431). I wish to place on record that those extracts are wholly misleading unless the full context of the speech is read. (Government laughter.)

THE SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Keppel*): I desire permission to make a personal explanation.

The SPEAKER: Is it the pleasure of the House that the Secretary for Railways be allowed to make a personal explanation?

HONOURABLE MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SPEAKER: I should like to point out to the hon. member for Port Curtis that his statement was not in the nature of a personal explanation.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I desire to state that I did not tear the remarks I quoted from the hon. member's speech from the context. I gave the quotation as it appeared in the "Advance Proof" of "Hansard," which was supplied to me by the Government Printer.

Mr. FLETCHER: If you had read it right through, you would have got a very different impression.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: I had a complete copy of your speech.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES, 1920-1921.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt from His Excellency the Deputy Governor of a message transmitting the Supplementary Estimates, Revenue, Trust (No. 2), and Loan, 1920-1921.

The Estimates were ordered to be printed and the messages to be referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY LOAN ESTIMATES, 1921-1922.

The SPEAKER announced the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Deputy Governor transmitting the Supplementary Estimates (Loan), 1921-1922.

The Estimates were ordered to be printed and referred to Committee of Supply.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—FIFTEENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC LANDS.

CHIEF OFFICE.

Question stated—

"That £60,509 be granted for 'Lands Department—Chief Office.'"

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): He had said he would willingly give the land to those who were prepared to go out into the bush and combat the disadvantages of the country. That was just exactly what the Government of Canada did under their great land settlement scheme. They surveyed the land in living areas and gave the freehold to the settlers, and no settlement in the world had been so rapid as that of Canada.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How much settlement is going on there now?

Mr. WARREN: It was going on there now, too.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is not.

Mr. WARREN: Canada had received millions of settlers by that means, and permanent settlement at that; but the handicap of Queensland to-day was not that they had not good land or sufficient land or that the pear was taking possession of the State, but that they had a hide-bound land system. They had land within reasonable distance of the railways that could be occupied successfully. There were people who were crying out for land, and there were other people who should be on the land, and all they had

to do was to open it for selection under freehold tenure. Much had been said about soldier settlement, and he intended to deal a little with it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I intend that you shall not, until we get to the Loan Estimates.

Mr. WARREN: It was his intention to deal with it at some time during the consideration of the Estimates. He had been asking questions and had not got an honest reply. One hon. member opposite had quoted the leader of the Nationalist party as saying that the Government were doing the right thing. He did not feel annoyed with the hon. member for Windsor for his statement. But he was speaking from the point of view of the city man, and not from that of the man who had toiled on the land or who understood the land. Whilst the hon. member's remarks were misleading, they were not meant to be so, because no man had laid himself out more to advance the interests of those who had done something for the country than that hon. member. The fact of the matter was that things were very bad in the soldier settlement at Beerburum, and no attempt was made to combat them. They had a deputation to the Secretary for Public Lands only last week, one of whom made the statement that there were people on the settlement who were actually short of food, and that there were children who had not sufficient clothing or sufficient food.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And you believe it?

Mr. WARREN: He did.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are compelling me to make a statement about two men on that settlement that I wanted to avoid making; but I will not allow you to get that into "Hansard" without replying.

At 4.48 p.m.,

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

Mr. WARREN: If there was a man on that settlement who was not honest or who did not stand for an honest thing, he did not stand for him. He had taken cases of actual want to the Minister, who was good enough to rectify the trouble. He did not say that amongst a lot of men like that they would not have any man who was not a satisfactory settler; but, when he asked the Minister certain questions, the hon. gentleman should have answered them in a straightforward manner instead of getting round them.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What were they?

Mr. WARREN: He asked him particularly about the analyses of the soil at Beerburum and Coominya soldier settlements. The analyses of the soil were distinctly unsatisfactory.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: How do you know that?

Mr. WARREN: He had seen the analyses. He wanted to see whether the Minister would supply the analyses. Why was there any need to hide these things? The analysis of the soil proved that that land could not produce two crops without exhausting the productivity of the land itself. That applied to a big proportion of the land. It would have been far better for the Government to have taken some action when they knew

Mr. Warren.

these things after the Minister for Repatriation had visited the Beerburum settlement and found that fertilisers had not been put in. The income of the settlers was very unsatisfactory. About £750,000 had been put into the settlement, and the matter should have been gone into. The longer it went on the worse it would be for the State. He did not say now that the land would not be productive, but the analysis was against it, and it was up to the Government to attend to those things. He had asked the Minister whether he was prepared to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate it. A report had been made by a gentleman who was a supporter of the Government, and, if that report had been favourable to the settlement, it would have been published long ago.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You asked the question, and you knew all about it.

Mr. WARREN: He knew about it when the Minister for Repatriation came up, but he wanted to know whether the Minister knew.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have never seen the report.

Mr. WARREN: He wanted to know whether the hon. gentleman had taken the precaution to have that soil analysed. The great trouble with the settlement was that the settlers were not growing the right things on the right land. Probably even now that land was good for one purpose and some of it good for another, and why in the name of goodness did the department not investigate the matter and see exactly where they stood? The Minister personally was not to blame; it was the fault of the system. Had the settlement been handed over to the Department of Agriculture at the commencement, he was of the opinion that they would have got better results. It was time they got busy to see whether it was going to be a paying proposition or otherwise. He did not know of one man on the settlement whose return had been more than £300 in one year. Settlers had to pay horse feed, because horses could not live there unless they were fed all the time. They had to provide money for other things, including fertilisers. Their prospects of making an ordinary and fair living out of the land were very poor, indeed.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are a Jeremiah.

Mr. WARREN: He would sooner be a Jeremiah than a shuffler.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are both.

Mr. WARREN: The hon. gentleman, as head of the department, was shuffling on the question. The hon. gentleman knew perfectly well that things were not sailing smoothly, and he knew perfectly well that they were not only robbing those men of the best years of their life, but they were breaking their hearts into the bargain. He had asked the Minister how many men had been on the settlement, and the Minister had given a reply which was not a correct one—it was an evasion.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: About the number of men on the settlement?

Mr. WARREN: That was all right. He had asked for the number of men who had left the settlement, and the answer given was not correct.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It is correct; I have the official figures.

[Mr. Warren.

Mr. WARREN: The official figures were like the settlement—unsatisfactory. He knew of forty people who had left the settlement, and the Minister had replied that there were thirty. There was something wrong somewhere. Why was there any need to hide the number of men who had left that settlement? He was of the opinion that more than 100 had left the settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they listen to your squealing, they will be all gone soon.

Mr. WARREN: His silence would not benefit the men on that settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You quote my answer, and see what is wrong with it.

Mr. WARREN: He would do so. It was merely evasion. The settlement, properly and sympathetically managed, would be a success; but, by acting in that manner, they were not going to make it a success. His best wish was for the advancement of the settlement, and it was no use keeping quiet on the matter. He had kept quiet on the matter until he was ashamed to do so any longer. It was only because he was absolutely ashamed, and because he realised the urgency for something being done, that caused him to speak that afternoon. He had asked the Minister—

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

“2. Will he state how many men have left the Beerburum settlement?”

The Minister replied—

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

“2. At the present time there are thirty-one blocks on the Beerburum settlement which have either been forfeited or surrendered, twenty of which are now open for re-selection. 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.”

Those answers were an evasion of the questions he had asked. He quite agreed with the right of the Minister to forfeit [5 p.m.] land where the soldier would not work it, but what he complained about was that the hon. gentleman's answers were an evasion of his questions. The Minister was asked how many men had left the Beerburum settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Just to satisfy your curiosity, have I to go and spend pounds and pounds in research into the matter?

Mr. WARREN: It must be something like the accounts at Beerburum, if the hon. gentleman would have to spend pounds and pounds to answer his question.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Mirani asked me a question a couple of days ago, and it would have cost £500 to get the information required.

Mr. WARREN: This answer would not have cost 5d., if the books were kept cor-

rectly. He had never yet asked for information which was going to run the country into expense. The hon. gentleman now admitted that the answer was not a correct answer to his question; he had admitted that he would not go into it because of the expense.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I gave the information which the public require.

At 5.3 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

MR. WARREN: He was speaking for the returned soldiers, and he was sure they wanted something more than that. A deputation from the Beerburum Settlement had waited upon him and empowered him, as the representative of the district, to ask those questions. He was anxious to see the settlement a success, but the present method was not making it a success. He was an ex-soldier himself and a representative of the ex-soldiers at the settlement, and he thought the hon. gentleman ought to have answered his questions as they appeared on the business paper.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You know very well that the questions, as they are put there, are not in the interests of the soldiers.

MR. WARREN: The questions were asked to promote the success of the settlement. The men were gradually going away from the settlement. He asked the Minister what was the average income of the men on the settlement from the start, and it would startle the Chamber if the hon. gentleman were to give an answer. The reason why he (Mr. Warren) had kept quiet about the matter was because he was in hopes that the methods at the settlement would be altered and that the evil would be rectified; but on nearly every soldier settlement he had been on the Government handled the men as if they were goods and chattels, and under that system they were not getting the best results. He recognised that every settlement of this description would have its handicaps, but he believed that the trouble had been increased by bad management. In many cases the accounts rendered to the men were wrong. He took the account of a man named Munro to the department. In the ordinary course of events that account should have been returned to him, but it was returned to the man in the same state as it was sent to him (Mr. Warren). That was not a fair thing. He believed there was no one more able to alter things than the Minister, and, until an alteration was made, they were faced with the prospects of disaster at Beerburum.

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

MR. PETRIE (*Toombul*): Although neither a squatter, a grazier, a selector, nor a farmer, he had listened with very great interest to the discussion. It seemed to him that the whole debate had centred round the subject of leasehold versus freehold. It was a peculiar thing that hon. members opposite who advocated leasehold tenure went in for freehold when they themselves acquired property. He did not blame them, but he wanted hon. members to be consistent. In New Zealand, which was often quoted as an example in legislation, they had the perpetual leasehold tenure for many years, but

they had gone back to the freehold tenure. The man on the land had a lot of difficulties to contend with, and he had not been treated as he ought to have been by former Governments—let alone by the present Government, which had increased income and land tax, and raised rents by repudiatory legislation. Was there any wonder that there were not many people anxious to go on the land? To show how some of the men on the land suffered, he would quote a poem which would be interesting to those who were seeking to make their fortunes on the land in Queensland—

“THE SQUATTER.

“‘THE GOOSE THAT LAID THE GOLDEN EGG.’
“‘Go on the land they said,’ and pulled my leg,
‘For I’m the goose that laid the Golden Egg.’

Some years ago I leased a block of land,
And at the grazing game I took a hand;
For years I fought the dingoes and the drought,
And I was all but down and counted out.
My luck was out, but still I battled on,
Until my cash was absolutely gone.
Then fortune changed, and I’d a decent year,
And so I faced the world without a fear.

I thought the Kelly gang was dead and gone,
But still I find their spirits living on;
The difference is, instead of Dan and Ned,
The Government demands your cash instead.

Yes, by and by I got an awful shock
When at my cottage door there came a knock;
For standing on the steps was Theodore,
And on his face a pleasant smile he wore.
A gun he cocked and levelled at my head;
‘Cheer up,’ said he, ‘because you’ll soon be dead;
Unless you ante up your income tax,
You’ll get it where the chicken got the axe.
Against a gun I didn’t look for lash,
And so I handed out my ready cash.

Another knock, and there was Billy Hughes,
And when he drew a gun I got the blues;
‘Your cash,’ said he; ‘I hear you’re making stacks;
So shell out quick and pay your income tax.’
Said I, ‘This double-banking’s pretty hot,
But Theodore was first and got the lot.’
He took a steady aim and simply laughed,
And so I went and raised an overdraft.

Another knock, ‘twas Billy Hughes once more,
And I could tell that Bill was out for gore.
‘Hands up,’ said he, ‘I’ll drop you in your tracks
Unless you pay your War Time profits tax,’
‘How much?’ said I; said Billy ‘All you’ve got,’
I sold my stock and Billy got the lot.

Mr. Petrie.]

A knock once more, and there was Theodore,
Who said 'The rent's too small; I want
some more.'

I got my lease and showed it duly signed,
And said I always thought a bond should
bind.

He shouted out—I wouldn't swear he
swore—

'It's just a scrap of paper, nothing
more.'

And he raised his gun and added, 'Don't
be rash.'

And so I sold my home to raise the cash.

I'm homeless ever since they raised the
rent;

I'm stony broke and haven't got a cent;
But still I laugh—they've touched my
funny bone—

They skinned me first, and now they
want a loan.

It's useless now to come to me and beg—
They've killed the goose that laid the
Golden Egg." (Laughter.)

That man was to be pitied and sympathised with, and he hoped that, whatever the Government did, they would at all events endeavour to make things as easy as possible for the man on the land, so that, instead of having a number of young men hanging round the cities, they would take up land and add to the wealth of the country.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): There had been a good deal said on the question of leasehold as against freehold, and there must be a good deal of common sense used in deciding whether leasehold or freehold was the better tenure. In the closely settled areas, such as they had on the Darling Downs, and in the areas with a better rainfall, where all-round farming operations were carried out, he said unhesitatingly that freehold was preferable to leasehold. Leasehold might be all very well in the West and in the drier districts, where the land was taken up in large areas. He did not for one moment say that the Government were acting wrongly in insisting on the leasehold tenure in regard to the larger grazing areas in the Charleville and other districts; but, when it came to the closely settled areas, where dairying, wheatgrowing, and such things were carried on, the Government should reconsider their decision and grant freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What is the object of that?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Because every man liked to have his freehold. He liked to feel that the land was his. Closer settlement was carried out by the Government in a slipshod way. The Minister knew very well that there were large areas of land held close to railway lines—land eminently suitable for agriculture, dairying, and all-round farming—and yet the Government, when they wanted to settle people on the land, settled them from 25 to 40 miles from the nearest railway line, and expected them to make a success of the business.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Are those large areas?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Yes.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Crown lands?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They were not Crown lands. They were freeholds. The hon. gentleman, with a sort of sneer or scoff,

[*Mr. Petrie.*

said "Pooh"! If the hon. gentleman wanted to be a successful administrator in the Lands Department, he had to use common sense. One would naturally expect, when it came to a question of closer settlement, that the land close to railway lines would be the first land to be subdivided for closer settlement purposes. On the Downs they had, close to Toowoomba, the Jondaryan Estate, and then, further out towards Dalby, there were thousands of acres of excellent agricultural land within a mile of a railway line, and much of it abutting on the railway line, and yet, when a man wanted land, he was sent miles away from a railway. He asked the Minister to consider the question of taking over those lands for closer settlement purposes. The Minister had all the power he wanted, and, surely, it was better to see a man settled on land close to a railway line than placed on land a long distance from a railway, where he would have to cart his produce long distances.

The question of water supply was one that was always irritating the settler. Even on some of the soldier settlements there was no provision made for water, and as the department dealt with a water supply for soldier settlements, so also it dealt with other settlements. Men were settled on land a long distance from water and where water was difficult to obtain, and, surely, it ought to be the duty of the Government, first of all, to test the possibility of securing water at a reasonable cost and see that that water was of such a nature as to be drinkable by stock as well as by the people. In many of the settlements they have had to go to a depth of 400 or 500 feet for water, and when they got it it was salty. Whenever any little surface water was gone, the settlers had to ask people 10 or 12 miles away to allow them to use a certain waterhole at a particular place in order to keep their stock alive. In a drought those people were compelled to drive their stock 10 or 12 miles to water, give them a drink, drive them home, and the next day drive them back for another drink. Nothing killed stock quicker than keeping them continually on the road; and, if they were going to have progressive land settlement, it was the duty of the Government to see that water was available before they allowed settlers to go on the land. For many years they could not look forward to railway construction being carried out to any great extent in connection with the closer land settlement scheme. Nevertheless, he was of opinion that any future land settlement should be taken into consideration in conjunction with railway construction, and it would be the duty of the Government of the day to see that railway construction always preceded land settlement in future. Under the present conditions, they had men settled on the land 30 and 40 miles from a railway. They settled there with a distinct undertaking that a railway would be constructed in the near future, and to-day those men find it impossible to make a living. Numbers of settlers were going off the land because of the unsympathetic treatment meted out by the present and past Governments. The land was not settled as it should be, and many people were struggling who should be doing well if they had received proper treatment. The hon. member for Toowoomba, in advocating leasehold as against freehold, made the statement that the returned soldiers on the leasehold system were paying 1½ per cent. of the upset price

of the land. That certainly was not the case with the soldier settlement on Cecil Plains, because the men there were paying £2 10s. an acre with all improvements on it, and the land was valued for rental purposes at from £2 10s. to £3 an acre. If they went to Cecil Plains, they would find that the returned soldiers were paying from 2s. 6d. to 2s. 9d. per acre per annum for a 640-acre block. That was a great deal more than 1½ per cent.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Toowoomba was referring to Crown lands, and you are not.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The returned soldiers on Cecil Plains were paying a rent from £76 to £84 per annum for a 640-acre block. They received £625 from the Commonwealth, and out of that they received a paltry £175 to buy stock. It was absolutely absurd to expect a soldier to buy sufficient stock for £175. There should be a more equitable distribution of the money made available for the returned soldier. The men at Cecil Plains were anxious to go in for dairying and farming. The Minister knew the country as well as anybody, and he knew that it took a lot of horse-power to plough the black soil on Cecil Plains. Yet he expected the soldiers to buy dairy cows, horses, and other animals for £175! There was a man who had been on the Cecil Plains Estate for twenty to twenty-five years, and he knew it from one end to the other. He should have been selected as supervisor and adviser to the returned soldiers, but the department said, "No, we will give it to some other man." It was all right to give a returned soldier preference wherever it could be done, but it was a disastrous state of affairs when they decided on that course for the Cecil Plains Estate. The first supervisor told the men that Cecil Plains was not suitable for agricultural purposes, and advised them not to go in for agriculture. That man was superseded by another supervisor who went round the estate and told them to grow crops. They found some of the men trying to grow barley on soil unfit for barley growing, and others were trying to grow wheat where barley should be grown, and other crops on soil unsuitable for the purpose. Yet they were told that the soldier settlement there would be a success.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Is not the soldier settlement on Cecil Plains a success?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: No.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then you do not know anything about it.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: When doctors differed the patient died, and in this case the returned soldiers would go out. If the Minister took the trouble to go to Cecil Plains he would admit that the settlement was not a success. The supervisor there purchased cattle at £32 a head. It was the idea of the soldiers to go in for mixed farming, but when the Government took the property over they allowed the then general manager of State stations to purchase a lot of second-quality steers. About 900 to 1,000 second-quality steers were sent to Cecil Plains, and they were there some time before they were disposed of. It would have been better to have purchased dairy heifers.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We did not purchase the steers. Did you say we purchased the steers for milking purposes? (Laughter.)

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He apologised to the Committee for the Minister's ignorance. If they had purchased dairy heifers for the returned soldiers, there would have been a chance of getting them at a reasonable price. Unfortunately, the Government could not look ahead, and the soldiers of Cecil Plains were asked to pay from £12 to £15 a head for their stock. In one case the supervisor paid £32 for a cow.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Are you sure of that?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He was absolutely certain of it. He could give the name of the man who sold the cow and the date of the sale. Yet the soldier was supposed to purchase dairy cattle and farm horses with a paltry £175. They were milking from seven to nine cows each, and had no money left to buy other stock. They might have one horse for a spring cart and one other horse for the plough, and they might be able to use the two horses in a single-furrow plough. The position was ridiculous. In

order that the Minister might be [5.30 p.m.] kept au fait with everything done on that settlement, he had asked the Government Whip, at the time he (Mr. Roberts) went there, to arrange for two Government members to accompany him; and he was informed there were not any members available. The extraordinary thing was that, when he was in Brisbane the following week, he met two Government members who would have been pleased to make that trip—one of them particularly so. They had never been given the invitation by the Government Whip.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You made a dismal failure of that expedition.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Perhaps they had. It appeared to him that a great deal of good was going to accrue from it. He trusted it would not be very long before the Minister would see his way clear to accept an invitation.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I have been there. I manage the business at present, and go when I can.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Surely a settlement of that kind was deserving of a visit from the Minister at least once every twelve months. He did not think the hon. gentleman had been there in the last twelve months. With all their talk about the settlement of their lands, they were treating the returned soldiers in exactly the same way as settlers were treated years ago. It was quite unreasonable to expect a man to go twenty-five or thirty miles from a railway line and make a success of farming operations. So long as the present party occupied the Treasury benches he trusted they would co-operate with members of other parties to bring about an effective and successful land settlement scheme. Land settlement was too big a question to play with. They had played with it long enough. It had been made a sort of football, first by one party and then by another. In the future they should treat these schemes with far greater seriousness than had been the case in the past. They should be able to evolve a scheme to bring about a state of prosperity for their settlers, no matter whether they occupied 100, 200, 500, or 1,000 acres. Let them settle first the lands nearest to the railways, and let them consider the question of settling the lands at a distance from the railways. They should

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not continue the present condition of drift. They did not realise the responsibility they owed to the men on the land, or the debt the State owed to those men. To-day those men were producing the foodstuffs for Queensland and for Australia, and the prosperity of Australia was dependent absolutely upon the export of their primary products. Had it not been for the export of wool, butter, cheese, bacon, meat, and other primary products, the position of Queensland would have been infinitely worse than it is.

Mr. BRENNAN: There will be no population to consume it.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He advised the hon. gentleman and his colleagues to go into the question of immigration.

Mr. BRENNAN: We are going into it.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They had never done anything which would lead him to think they believed in immigration. Although they belonged to different parties, there was no earthly reason why they should not all get together for the consideration of a big national question of this kind. He appealed to the Minister to give the matter consideration in the very near future.

Mr. G. P. BARNES (*Warwick*): He would have preferred to pass on to other matters, but the great importance of the question demanded better consideration from the Committee than it possibly was likely to receive. The Committee was indebted to the hon. members for Murilla, Burnett, and Pittsworth for their advocacy of land settlement. Had it not been for the firm stand taken by those hon. members, the vote probably would have gone through when very little had been said. There were many other members on that side who were deeply in earnest regarding land settlement, but those to whom he had referred had been deputed to place the position before the Chamber. They were not realising as they should that they were not making any headway regarding land settlement. For years, agriculture had been at a standstill. If things had suddenly taken a turn for the better and agriculture was on the increase, it was something for which they should be thankful. He was inclined to think, however, that no extra settlement had taken place. As a result of the inducement offered by the better prices being received, very much keener attention possibly was being given to agriculture by those who already held land; but the sale of farming properties was almost a thing of the past. Men could scarcely be induced to take up fresh country because of the downright hard work attached to agriculture and dairying. He recollected the splendid development which took place, especially during the term of office of the late Hon. J. T. Bell, and which continued for some years afterwards. They knew the great life there was in land settlement then. Just now there was no evidence of anything being done. It appalled him to think that, in a great land like Queensland, instead of people going on to the land, in many cases they were leaving it. He had turned up the report for last year of the Department of Agriculture and Stock. On page 2 of that report he found that, whilst in 1915 there were 22,095 holders of land engaged in cultivation, in 1919 there were only 22,126—an increase of but 31. Of course he did not know what movement took place last year, but the fact remained that only about 3 per cent. of their population were engaged in agriculture as

owners of land. They could only come to the conclusion that they had utterly failed in their aim to induce people to settle on the land. The facts and the figures were against them—they had done practically nothing for years. Surely the country should demand some explanation as to what was wrong. Something was wrong, and there must be some explanation. Of course, living in the country as he did, he was aware that during recent years an exodus of young life had taken place from the country. City life and its attractions had induced the young life of the country to go to the city. The movement had also followed the increase in wages which had taken place during recent years—he was not complaining that it had taken place. He had sat on his veranda and had a couple of young men at a time—young, strong, buoyant, country boys—coming to him and asking for references. He asked their names and found they were farmers' sons. "Why are you leaving?" he would ask, and he would be told, "We can do much better in the city. There is something better in prospects there, and farming is uncertain." So they went to the city to go into the police force or the railways, or some other Government department, or the tramways. One was continually writing out references for young fellows who wanted to leave the land in order to engage in city pursuits. It all pointed to the fact that they had to do something to make land settlement attractive. No doubt the determination of many young men to leave the land was coincident with the taxation which had been imposed. He questioned whether he was not perfectly right in saying that, so far as his knowledge of the Downs went, there was not a farm there which was worth within 25 per cent. to 50 per cent. of what it was six or seven years ago. The bulk of the people ascribed the downward tendency to two things—the land tax and the introduction of the perpetual lease. He was not against the perpetual leasehold tenure—he thought it should be optional. If a man wanted a freehold, let him have it; if he wanted a perpetual lease, let him have it. In his district, at Maryvale, some of the settlers had converted their land into leasehold, whilst their neighbours abhorred the very idea. Let them widen the opportunities and inducements, and alter the conditions under which men might take up land. Certainly there was a need to seek some way out of the groove into which they had got. Every thinking man should give earnest attention to the problem. The country must be made attractive. When that distinguished man, Lord Northcliffe, left Australian shores the other day, his last message was—

"Realise that earth-hunger has been the cause of almost every war in history. The only means of preventing ambitious men from grasping your country is to rob them of the excuse by peopling your empty spaces."

Nobody could say there was anything extravagant in an utterance of that kind. Queensland had the land, and it was only to be made valuable by occupation. Surely there was a call for the Government to give earnest and intense thought and action to bring about some system by which land settlement could be made practicable! Whether it was due to the policy of the Government that land settlement was not taking place he did not know, but the fact

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remained. Was the moment not ripe for the consideration of the question? With the thought of immigration from the old land—with the efforts that were being made in various directions there to enlist the sympathies of the people in Australia—should they not devote their earnest efforts to providing opportunities for people from the agricultural centres of the old land to come here and take up the land which their own people declined, and for which they showed no particular love?

He was extremely glad to hear the remarks of the hon. members for Burnett and Murilla about prickly-pear destruction. Ever since he came into the House—a good many years ago now—every year that question had been uppermost in their thoughts; it was like interest—it never slept. Every year the pear was spreading, and, if the estimate made to-day was correct—and he rather feared it was—they were going to the bad every year to the extent of 1,000,000 acres or more. In other days the advocacy was in the direction of buffer areas, and compelling men to keep their land clean—that the leaseholder or squatter, or whoever held the land, who did not keep his land clean had no right to possess it. Their vast estate was dwindling and becoming worthless, simply because they allowed the men who occupied the land to go year after year without expending one penny in the destruction of pear. It was time that they gave the matter very earnest attention. Although they had talked about it and thought about it, yet they had done practically nothing. The report of the Department of Public Lands, dealing with the eradication of pear, said—

“The eradication of the prickly-pear pest continues to occupy the serious attention of the department, and is a problem of grave anxiety. In those districts where settlers have been compelled to devote almost all their energies to saving their stock on account of the scarcity of water, pear destruction has been reduced to a minimum; but, all things considered, a large amount of good work has been done to check the growth of the pest.”

They had the other statement that they were going to the bad to the extent of about 1,000,000 acres a year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is only the statement of the hon. member for Burnett.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He hoped that the departmental report was true, but he feared that, instead of overtaking the pest, it was gaining ground upon them every year. He was not unaware that the department had sent delegates abroad, who had done good work, and he hoped that their reports and their work would bear fruit. He was glad that one man in the community had not slept in connection with his advocacy and his determination to combat the spread of prickly-pear—he referred to Mr. Temple Clerk. No man had been so constant and untiring in his efforts in that direction as Mr. Temple Clerk.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: What is his reward?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: The Minister said last year his case would not be overlooked, and he believed the hon. gentleman must have had under consideration at the time some mode of recognising the efforts and the enthusiasm of Mr. Temple Clerk. If the

work achieved in the North, which was quoted last year—the almost entire extermination of pear in certain districts—was a fact, then Mr. Temple Clerk was entitled to the very best consideration that the country and Parliament could give him. He hoped that Mr. Temple Clerk would not be in any need, and that there would be some recognition of the work he had done. The fact of his advocacy and earnestness in connection with that matter demanded recognition. Mr. Temple Clerk had kept the spread of pear before them day in and day out, and, if the distribution of the insect life which had been introduced by him was effective in connection with the varieties of pear that they knew abounded in their midst, as had been proved in some of the Northern areas, then they might hope that good results were going to follow his efforts. There was also the work that was going on as a result of the efforts made by those deputed by the department.

The hon. member for Toowoomba had referred to certain lands around Warwick, but that hon. gentleman had not been in Warwick of late years. The hon. gentleman had referred to Lonsdale and Mount Tabor, and he believed that, if one went there to-day, they would find a very different order of things. He did not say that the land was being cultivated as fully as it ought to be. There were two areas at Mount Tabor on which a son and son-in-law of the late owner, Mr. Canavan, were engaged in agriculture. Mount Tabor this year had a considerable area under wheat. He thought that Lonsdale had also an area under wheat. The property was neglected some years ago, but it was not so at the present moment. It was only right that he should put the hon. member for Toowoomba right.

Mr. BRENNAN: I accept what you say.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: A degree of cultivation was taking place in connection with those two estates, which were owned by the late Mr. Canavan, who was one of the best pioneers.

Mr. BRENNAN: He had too much land.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He probably did own too much land, but he was one of the successful men. There would be hope for the country if they could get hold of the old breed of man who came out in the early pioneering days. To-day they had to turn round and find a silver spoon to put into every man's mouth. He remembered going out into that district forty-five years ago, and it pained him to see the life that those men lived, and how they went out into the scrub land with the grim determination that they put into their work and how their efforts were supplemented by the womenfolk. They were the stuff who developed the country. What the State had to guard against to-day was the possibility of doing too much for men. They wanted men to go out with a bit of experience and a bit of determination, and, if they possessed ambition and enterprise and threw their souls into their work, nothing was going to prevent them from being successful. Not very long ago a man sent for him to come to the hospital. That was a case in point as to the breed of men in other days. The man said, “You remember me; I want to make my will.” He said, “I will have to get you a legal man.” The man said, “You remember me, Mr. Barnes. When I came to you many years

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ago carrying my 'bluey,' I wanted a bit of help and you gave it to me." He (Mr. Barnes) said, "I don't remember it," and the man said, "I have got two farms."

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: Who was the man?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: He had no objection to giving the name. That man was Peter Anderson. That man had nothing when he commenced, and said he was going to get a farm, yet when he saw him he had two farms and was able to set one boy on one and another boy on the other. That was the kind of man who had developed the country in the past. With men of that class, there was hope for the land; but there was the danger of doing too much for people whose real sympathies were not in favour of the development of the land.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): He did not think that the settlers in Queensland got the consideration they were entitled to receive from the Government. He pre-

[7 p.m.] sumed that the Secretary for Public Lands was the biggest landlord in the world, and probably had the largest rental revenue. The hon. gentleman's department had received £1,400,000 from rents this year. How much did he return to his tenants out of that? Instead of being the best landlord, as the Minister claimed to be, he was absolutely the worst. Out of the rent which he received from his tenants he returned less than any landlord in the world. He was worse than any Irish or English landlord.

Mr. WARREN: Or Australian.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Or Australian. He was not saying that the Government were any exception to any other Government. Some portion of the £1,400,000 which the Minister received in rent should go back to assist land settlement; too much of it was spent in the closely settled areas. Take the Burnett lands, for example. He contended that railways could be built into the Burnett district which would pay for themselves. There was no need to go cap in hand to the Commonwealth Government or anyone else to borrow money at 7 per cent. to build railways into the Burnett. The increased value of the land which was brought about by the construction of the railways would cover the cost of their construction.

Mr. BRENNAN: That is our argument—unearned increment.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member's party took all the money they could out of the settlers and spent it in closely settled places instead of using it for water conservation purposes and in other directions to increase settlement. There were only about 750,000 people in Queensland, with 400,000,000 acres of land, and yet they could not live without borrowing! It was a disgrace to any Government to have to borrow like the present Government were doing.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: How many million pounds have been spent to assist the returned soldiers?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He contended that one of the biggest mistakes in connection with soldier settlement was that the soldiers had been put on the land without any provision being made for the manufacture of their produce into saleable articles. That should be one of the cardinal points in all land

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settlement. In a big dairying area, such as the Burnett, provision should be made to establish butter factories. It was no use encouraging people to grow a lot of stuff for the local market, if there was no sale for it owing to the fact that there were not enough people to consume it; they should be able to export their surplus produce. He was very much afraid that a large percentage of the soldiers were going to be unsuccessful. In some cases they had not a sufficient area of land. Within 150 miles of the coast they had millions of acres available. At a distance of 150 miles from the coast, going from Mackay to Clermont, through Nebo, there were hundreds of thousands of acres of some of the finest grazing land to be found in the State. All along the range there was room for hundreds of thousands of dairy farmers. Yet they cooped men up, and gave them for fruitgrowing purposes some of the worst land in the State. Land on which they had to use fertilisers for the first crop was not good land.

Mr. BRENNAN: Down at Mildura they have 5 acres each.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: That was a different thing altogether. At Mildura a man was certain of a crop, and had the freehold title to the land. The Minister knew that in connection with all the soldier settlements in Queensland all the title the men had was permission to occupy the land. The clearing of the land cost £27 an acre, and then there was £30 an acre for planting. That brought the cost up to about £60 an acre, and, if they added another £5 an acre for the erection of a house and other things, it brought the cost up to £65 an acre. The soldier selector had about £65 an acre in the land and the Minister had 30s.—and the man who had an interest of 30s. an acre in the land held the deeds. Surely the man who had £65 in the land should hold the deeds?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He has not 60 pence in it.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Those men had put in three or four years' labour. Would the Minister like to put that down at 60 pence?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We paid for that labour.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: At 30s. a week.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: At the award rates.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He would advise the Government to remove a very big proportion of the soldier settlers, because those men were going to struggle and struggle on and they were going to fail in the end. He would remove them to the good lands all along the coast that he had referred to. He had seen land there quite equal to the best land on the Darling Downs. The late wheat crop had not put the amount of money into circulation that was expected.

Mr. BRENNAN: £500,000.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: How much of that £500,000 had gone into circulation?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask the hon. member to connect his remarks with the vote.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He was connecting his remarks with the vote; because they were using the money for land settlement. (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. member to point out the item on the Estimates to which he refers. The hon. member will be in order in discussing the question on the vote for the Department of Agriculture and Stock.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The prickly-pear was one of the biggest pests they had to deal with in connection with the Lands Department. Years ago he had pointed out that the only way to stop the prickly-pear from spreading was to give people clean land in front of the spread of the pear. If that had been done ten years ago, they would have saved 1,000,000 acres that were covered with pear to-day. He would give the people a living area and let them have as much land as they could clear back into the pear. If they were given clean land on the edge of the pear, that would form a wall of protection, because, in order to protect themselves, they certainly would not allow the pear to spread. He would not give them freeholds, but would give them an occupation license so long as they kept the land clear. Once the men got the land clear it was an easy matter to keep it clear unless adjoining land where there was a very big area of pear, and in such cases it was worth more than a big rent to keep the land clean. No doubt, that was the biggest problem with which they had to deal. One reason why there was not more settlement and why there was not a bigger demand for small areas was that farming was not a business proposition to-day.

Mr. W. COOPER: When was it a business proposition?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: He did not know, but he knew that it was not a business proposition to-day. It was impossible for the settler to pay a wage equal to that paid in the cities and at the same time make a living. So long as it was impossible to make a living on the land there would be no demand for land. There was too much demand for cheap food, and too much taxation put on the man on the land, and then the conditions in the cities were so much better. In many places the only person the settlers saw was the tax gatherer. He was the only man who was interested in them. In fact, the proper definition of a farmer to-day was "a tax-paying animal." His chief occupation was to earn taxes for the State.

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): He looked upon the Lands Department as one of the most important departments in the Government service. If they were going to settle the country they must have a big immigration policy. They would have to settle the immigrants on the land, and, therefore, it was necessary to devise the best means of settling those people with advantage to themselves and to the country. The department, if run with resourcefulness and initiative, could get the State out of many of its troubles, and he was sorry more had not been done. Last session he had made some suggestions regarding the settlement of lands in the Longreach district, but he did not suppose the Minister had done anything in that regard. When he was speaking last session the Minister stated that it was not possible to settle the Paroo lands in that way. That showed that the Minister did not know the districts to which he had referred. The lands in the Longreach district were very different to those around

the Paroo, and, when the Liberal Government got into power, he would want to know the reason why, if something was not done in that direction. They could not make a success of the scheme in all parts of the country, because all the land was not suitable.

Mr. PEASE: What about Port Curtis?

Mr. FLETCHER: It was not possible to do it there. It was the duty of the Government to assist the small settlers in every possible way, because every farmer who was successful would reflect on the rest of the community. He was in sympathy with all legislation that assisted the man on the land. They wanted to settle all the land along the existing railways first, and they should get surveyors to make all the land available as quickly as possible.

Mr. FORDE: Would you advocate that land be taken from the big holders?

Mr. FLETCHER: If the leases of the big holdings were falling due, he would be in favour of taking them for closer settlement. It was only by cutting up the land into small areas that they could develop the country. They should also go in for a drought-resisting scheme. In 1918 and 1919 they just missed a calamity by the prompt arrival of thunderstorms. If it had not been for those thunderstorms, Queensland would have had a very severe drought. Queensland was subject to droughts, and the time would come when they would have another drought as big as the drought of 1902. Nature had been most bountiful, and they should make provision during the good seasons to be ready for the droughts there were sure to come. Probably the Minister knew something of the scheme suggested for New South Wales, which he (Mr. Fletcher) thought quite practicable. It was proposed to divide New South Wales into fourteen districts, with a big central board in Sydney and a local board in each district. The local board would control and administer the scheme to much better advantage than a board operating from the city only. All the financing would be done by the central board. It was proposed to issue four different classes of bonds to finance the scheme—one to be taken up by the farmers, another by anyone in the community, and another for exchange and for buying fodder and so forth. Under the scheme large stocks of fodder would be stored along the railway. Stocks would be replenished as they were exhausted. There would be no glut in the good seasons, because the fodder would be purchased by the board and stored away and later on sold out at cost price to the farmers and settlers who required it in drought time. It would be also an inducement for farmers to grow crops.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! While the hon. gentleman's remarks are very interesting, I am afraid they are not quite in order on this vote. They would be more applicable to the vote for the Department of Agriculture and Stock.

Mr. FLETCHER: He was dealing with land settlement, and just referred to the drought-resistance scheme in passing. It was proposed to invest £5,000,000 in the scheme in New South Wales, but they could work on smaller lines in Queensland. Something would have to be done to develop Queensland and resist droughts in future. He hoped the Minister would take notice of his

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suggestion. A trial could be made by starting, say, on the Darling Downs. The man on the land worked tremendously long hours, and deserved every consideration. Not long ago he got into a train to Bowen at 5 a.m., and when he got to Rosedale he saw a lady having a cup of tea. He remarked that she was up early, and she replied, "I was up at 2 o'clock this morning, and I milked seventeen cows and drove 6 miles." After that he (Mr. Fletcher) remained silent. They should do all they could to assist the men on the land, because they had to work hard to make a living.

It was time that something was done to check the spread of the prickly-pear. They were told by the hon. member for Murilla that the pear was increasing at the rate of 1,000,000 acres per annum. No doubt, it was advancing at a tremendous rate; while it was a most difficult matter to eradicate it. It was the duty of the Lands Department to see that landholders, both large and small, kept their areas clean. He knew one man who had kept his land clean for years, but the adjoining areas were infested with pear. The Minister should try and check the spread of the pear. If they could only stop the pest from extending further, they would be doing something.

He was pleased to see that the Government had established a Forestry Department. That was one thing he gave the Government credit for. But it was wrong for the Government to trade in timber. They should do some more planting of timber, because it took a long time for the trees to grow. They should grow more timber for the use of posterity. If they did not do something now, their children would have to suffer for the neglect of the present Administration.

Mr. FORDE: Why are you opposed to State trading?

Mr. FLETCHER: It interfered with trade and caused the unemployment that at present existed.

[7.30 p.m.]

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): One thing needed in connection with this department was a statistical branch. The bearing which the policy of the Lands Department had upon other departments had been forcibly brought home to hon. members. Australia was greatly in need of immigration. For years hon. members on the opposite side had been pointing out the need for immigration if they were to hold this continent for themselves and those who came after them. Lord Northcliffe the other day had referred most pointedly to the teeming millions in Asia within a few days' sail of Australia, and the comparatively empty spaces that existed in Australia, and more particularly in Queensland. If there was one department more than another which could help to cope with this menace, it was the Lands Department. They did not want immigrants who would hang about the towns; they wanted those who would go on the land and produce. To enable them to do so, they must have land ready for them—land which was adjacent to railways and in an area that had a good rainfall. The Railway Department was another department which depended on the Lands Department. The Railway Department was losing money, and the Government found it difficult

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to devise a means for improving the position. Land settlement would be the very best way to cope with that loss by increasing the freight, and therefore the revenue of that department. One of the first things they needed in order to take stock of their position was information as to lands close to the railways with suitable rainfalls that lent themselves to close settlement. The preceding day he asked the Secretary for Public Lands the following questions to enable him to form an opinion as to what their capabilities were in regard to the matter—

"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, with 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 Minister's reply was—

"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."

He did not think a more short-sighted answer could have been given to a question of such importance.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do I know about the subdivision of freehold land? I know nothing at all about it.

Mr. SWAYNE: The hon. gentleman should know.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You should know as well as I do.

Mr. SWAYNE: If the hon. gentleman issued instructions to the Crown lands ranger in each district that officer could very soon give him the information. Everybody owning land had to furnish in his land tax return full particulars regarding his land and its situation.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you think the Commissioner of Taxes would allow me to send an officer of my department into his office to get that information?

Mr. SWAYNE: He realised that the information might be confidential.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course it is.

Mr. SWAYNE: Without divulging any confidential information, the areas could very well be obtained. With a little collaboration between the Taxation Department officials and the Crown lands rangers they could get a very good idea as to the areas of freehold, whether they were large or whether they were only a living area, held within a certain mileage of railway. The question he asked had also referred to Crown lands that were leased. He had asked a further question, confining himself to the Crown lands. Surely the hon. gentleman would be able to say what areas of land, within a certain distance of the railway and with a certain rainfall, were held under lease in his department. If they found that there were large areas of land which were not being put to the best use in the interests of the community as a whole, it was the duty of Parliament to deal with them.

Mr. BRENNAN: You would repudiate, would you?

Mr. SWAYNE: If they were going to hold Australia, they should have land settlement and make the railways pay. There was nothing of repudiation in the suggestion. Legislation was passed long ago by a previous Government to deal with such questions. The Opposition were not trying to make the railways pay by cutting down wages, but by bringing more freight to them and giving the department an opportunity to balance the expenses. He urged the establishment of a statistical branch to procure all the information possible upon this essential point. If necessary, let other departments collaborate with the Lands Department. They had cut up their Government departments too much into watertight departments. There should be a greater interchange of ideas and more assistance given between one department and another. If this Government failed to do it, it would not be very long before another party would take office who would fill the bill so far as land settlement and increased production were concerned.

He would like to say something with regard to the lands that were adjacent to projected railway lines. Take, for instance, the line between Mackay and Bowen, along the route of which was a large area of very good Crown lands which the department were holding back till the line was built, so that the State would get fair value for those lands. He was not blaming them particularly for that, but something better could be done. If the land was not opened till the line was built, it would be two or three years after that before any large area would become productive and furnish freight. Could the Minister not consider some scheme whereby the land could be thrown open for selection at current rates, with the arrangement that, when the railway was built, the price would be increased by the improvement due to the building of the railway? The result would be that people would go on the land, quite aware that its price would be increased when the railway was built, but in the meantime they would be making it productive and preparing freight for the railway when it came.

There was another aspect of land settlement of importance as bearing on the big problem of unemployment, which the Lands Department might help to alleviate. In times past, in areas adjacent to centres of

industry such as the sugar districts, land had been cut up in small areas of 5 acres, known as sugar-workers' blocks. There was no reason why the area should not be reduced near cities and towns to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre or 1 acre. The workers holding such blocks, when bad times came and there was unemployment, would not be entirely destitute of a means of livelihood. He had already pointed out on another vote the possibilities of producing food, such as vegetables and fruit, from small plots. He had known selectors who had produced everything they wanted, from the coffee they drank to the meat they ate, from a small holding, and it was quite possible close to Brisbane to have holdings where people could produce sufficient vegetables and milk for their own use. They all knew how small an area of land cultivated even with a spade would keep a cow. It was an idea well worthy of consideration, and he would urge that other departments should assist. The unfortunate part of the business in regard to such workers' blocks had been that they were unable to get any assistance towards building their houses. The ordinary selector could get assistance from the Advances to Settlers Corporation and the town dweller from the Workers' Dwellings Branch, but the other selectors he had mentioned—small in number, but sufficiently numerous to prove the great possibilities of such a scheme, who had cut themselves off from the conveniences and delights of town life to go a couple of miles out in order that they might be independent—were unable to borrow money from any State department to build their houses.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will not be in order in pursuing that line of argument.

Mr. SWAYNE: He acknowledged the justice of the Chairman's ruling, but it was a very important department, and it was very difficult to discuss the big question of land settlement unless a little latitude was allowed, to allude to some things which might be just a little outside the question.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member will be in order in referring to the question in passing, but not in discussing the merits or demerits of the system.

Mr. SWAYNE: He was pointing out that the scheme would require the assistance of other departments to make it a success, and, seeing that unemployment at the present time was a great problem, it seemed to him that any suggestion which could assist in relieving the acuteness of the position was well worthy of consideration.

He was quite sure that a great deal more would be done in the matter of increasing land settlement, making their railways pay, and relieving unemployment, if the Minister went a little bit beyond the four walls of his office, take the advice of practical men, and discuss such questions with those who had ideas on the subject.

Mr. JONES (*Kennedy*): Since they were dealing with the Lands Department vote, he thought it an opportune time to refute some of the statements that had been made by their communistic friends to the effect that the country was monopolised by the despised squatter, by reading a list of pastoral holdings in the Charters Towers Land Agent's

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District, showing the areas and portions resumable—

Holding.	Area. Sq. miles.	Resumption Rights.
Cargoos ...	132	7/16ths at any time
Lolworth ...	118½	Rights exhausted
Cargoos, No. 7 ...	50	7/16ths at any time.
Goldsbrough ...	106	ditto
Kulmen ...	29	1/4th at any time
Oakvale ...	61	7/16ths at any time
Cornelia ...	69½	1/4th after 31-12-23
Ballaby ...	26½	7/16ths at any time
Hawthorne Vale	21½	ditto
Leonidas ...	160	1/4th at any time
Niggers Bounce	39½	ditto
Weaner Vale ...	69½	ditto
Mount Stewart	62½	1/4th after 30-6-25
Range ...	26	ditto
Tuku ...	11½	1/4th at any time
Warrigal ...	51	ditto
Lottery ...	27½	ditto
Mucha ...	142	ditto
Mucha North ...	8½	ditto
Ju-tin ...	121	ditto
Maitland ...	114	ditto
Koburra ...	147	ditto
Bluff Downs ...	207½	Rights exhausted
Tallegulla ...	123	23 1/16 sq. miles at any time
Birdbush ...	159	40 5/16 sq. miles at any time
Hayes ...	33½	6 5-16 sq. miles at any time
Venetia ...	307	One half at any time

That would show the fallacy of the Government saying that there was no land open for selection.

Mr. POLLOCK: You know that is not very good land.

Mr. JONES: His land was there, and he paid £1 15s. a square mile for his land. What were the Government doing for the small selectors? They had to pay an average of £1 15s. to £3 or £4 per square mile. That was how they treated the small selectors in the North. As an illustration, in the parish of Fanning, there was an area of 2,730 acres the rent of which was 1½d. per acre. The selectors had to pay income tax as well as rates, and they had also to pay an education tax. If they improved their holdings by seeking for water, the Government taxed them for it. It was improving the public estate, and he thought the Government should subsidise the men who went out and found water in dry areas. No man could go on to land and improve it for his own benefit without benefiting the country he was living in. It was a fallacy to say there was no land open for selection. The only reason why land had not been applied for during the last couple of years was because of the legislation of the Government. The Government had not the slightest sympathy for the man on the land. They did a lot of tiddly winking for the farmers on the coast because they wanted their votes. He would warn the farmers that the Government would later on put the boot into them, if they did not put in both boots.

They had heard a good deal about the squatter. Unfortunately, the squatter was the pet aversion of hon. members opposite. He happened to be a squatter, and he did not expect any sympathy from the Government. There was no better class of people in Australia than the squatter. Away back in the olden times was there any better class of man in the country than the squatter?

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The squatter was the class of man who had made it possible for Queensland to be opened up in the first place.

The PREMIER: A squatter's advice to the farmers is not of much value.

Mr. JONES: He was not advising the farmers; he was advising the hon. gentleman. If the Government wanted to settle the country, it would not be done by the policy now being adopted. The Government were driving the people off the land. The small selectors had no possible hope of making a living. There were hon. members opposite who represented country constituencies in which there were many selectors, and they had not heard one word of sympathy from one of those hon. members for the unfortunate selectors.

The PREMIER: We give them practical assistance.

Mr. JONES: The crowd outside the House would not allow the Government to do so.

Mr. FORDE: We are always helping the small selectors.

Mr. JONES: Why this Government should hate the squatter he did not know. The squatter, in the first place, developed Queensland. The squatter went away out in the Western country, and put down bores in dry areas. Thousands of square miles were valueless through the lack of water. Who went out with capital and employed labour and discovered water? It was the squatter.

Mr. HARTLEY: The Government put down the first bore.

Mr. JONES: Was it not the present Government who said, "We will make the squatter squeal"?

The PREMIER: No.

Mr. JONES: The Government had made them squeal all right, but the workers had suffered for it. The Repudiation Act had stopped all improvement on the land. Why this Government should be envious of the man on the land, who was making money, he did not know. That was the very thing that was going to make Queensland. He could assure hon. members that if anyone could to-morrow put Queensland in the condition it was in two years ago, when they were all making money, it would be an improvement. Everybody in the country then was getting more than they had got before, and they had got a bit "colicky." They were getting the money freely, and they spent it freely. This Government had hounded down the squatter. He was a squatter, and he was not ashamed of it. He had been squatting practically all his life, and, if this Government got their way, he would be squatting for the rest of his life. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): He was surprised at the hon. member for Kennedy attempting to deceive the Committee by quoting figures which he (Mr. Jones) said showed the amount of country available in North Queensland for selection.

Mr. JONES: I only quoted the resumptions in one district.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member knew as well as he did that the bulk of the land he had quoted was not of very good quality. It was nothing like as good quality as the land around Hughenden and Winton. It

was not to be compared with it, either as sheep or cattle carrying country. It was practically of no use to a selector unless he got at least 40 to 50 square miles.

Mr. FLETCHER: The hon. member quoted areas of 40 or 50 square miles.

Mr. POLLOCK: Only a quarter of it was due for resumption at any time.

Mr. JONES: Seven-sixteenths in many cases.

Mr. POLLOCK: Even if one-half was due for resumption, there would not be more than 10,000 acres or 12,000 acres in any block.

Mr. FLETCHER: No.

Mr. POLLOCK: He had followed the hon. member fairly closely, and he was not trying to misrepresent him. He did not think the hon. member quoted any case that showed that there was more than 12,000 acres available for resumption on any of those holdings. The majority of them were holdings of which a quarter could be resumed, and there would only be 5,000 or 6,000 acres available for selection in each block. That area was not much use to any selector, particularly in that class of country. The hon. member himself had 100 square miles of country, and he was protesting that he could not pay the rent.

Mr. JONES: I never said anything of the sort.

Mr. POLLOCK: The only plank in the hon. member's platform was the repeal of what he (Mr. Jones) termed the Repudiation Act.

Mr. JONES: A good solid platform, too. (Laughter.)

Mr. POLLOCK: If the Government would refund the hon. member the amount of retrospective rent he had paid, he would have no platform at all; he would have to go out of Parliament or join the Labour party. (Laughter.)

The policy of closer settlement that the Lands Department had pursued was one that, in the main, met with his approval. He thought that the department had in many cases opened areas for selection

[8 p.m.] that had really been too small; but he was not blaming the department for that. He believed that a Government should always attempt to settle people on the smallest amount of land that could be considered a living area. The smaller the land on which a living could be made the larger the number of people who would be making a living, and the more production there would be, because the small selector utilised his land in a much better manner than the man with a big holding. It was obvious that three or four times the amount of labour would be employed on a small selection that was employed on the one big station before the resumptions were made; consequently a Government which experimented in the way of endeavouring to secure small living areas, even if it failed, deserved some credit for having tried to open up these small areas. There were some parts in his own constituency where a man would find it very difficult to make a living unless he had 50,000 or 60,000 acres of land. It was obvious that in a dry belt such as the Boullia belt it would be very difficult for any man to start and go to the large expense necessary to find water to make a living on a block of that size. In some cases, the

incoming selector had to go down 2,000 or 3,000 feet for water; and, unless a good number of selectors took advantage of the system of trust bores, which the Government had helped considerably in, they would find it difficult to get on. As the Secretary for Lands rightly pointed out, some of that country did not lend itself to the sinking and establishment generally of trust bores. A trust bore, in order to be successful, must be an efficiently constructed bore, which would water four or five selections, and which four or five selectors could jointly pay for. In most cases, unless the trust bore principle was workable, the selector had to be given a very large area in order to recoup himself for the very big expenditure he was put to not only in finding water but for erecting fences, improvements, and buying stock.

Mr. JONES: And paying his rent.

Mr. POLLOCK: Paying his rent was a consideration, but the rent was not everything.

Mr. JONES: It is.

Mr. POLLOCK: It was one of the smallest considerations in the life of the average selector.

Mr. JONES: You get out of work and have to pay house rent, and you will find what it is.

Mr. POLLOCK: It was different with selectors. When selectors started out knowing that they had to pay a certain amount to sink for water, no matter how much the actual cost exceeded the estimate, they would pay it cheerfully. When they started fencing, no matter how much the actual cost of the work exceeded the estimate, they would pay it. They bought stock and built a homestead. But the question of rent was a totally different proposition. They thought that the Government ought to charge only a nominal rent. The Government was generally considered fair game, and the selector was no exception to the rule.

Mr. EDWARDS: So it should be.

Mr. POLLOCK: If that was so, why all the talk about economy? If the Government should be fair game for everybody, why complain that the Government assisted selectors and could not make ends meet? If the Government were not to be picked on at every opportunity to help strugglers, then the Government could show a surplus; but, if the Government were to be picked on, it was impossible for them to show a surplus. Whichever way it went, the Opposition objected. The Opposition were always twitting the Government about increased expenditure; but, so long as the Government assisted the Opposition's own particular friends, they did not growl. They then came forward with requests for expenditure in one direction, and growled because expenditure was increased in another direction which did not affect their constituencies.

With regard to selection generally, the Government must always be guided by the circumstances in the particular district. There were districts where the ravages of dingoes made it necessary for a larger area to be given to a selector. As he had shown, in the Longreach and Barcaldine districts there were a number of selections opened that were too small in area, and they had been thrown up in many cases. He had a distinct recollection that the Lands Department had been asked to merge some of the areas which were thrown up into some of those which

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were being held, so as to give the selectors a living area. That country was probably the best country of any in Queensland. It was such good country that the department rightly determined to experiment in order to see whether the selectors could make a living on 5,000 or 6,000 acres. When selectors could not make a living on 5,000 or 6,000 acres of the best grazing land in Queensland, it was obvious that the land referred to by the hon. member for Kennedy would not be sufficient to make a living on. He knew the land the hon. member referred to; he was born around those parts and worked there when a boy. Most of that country was of no use except for grazing purposes, and it was not of much use for that as compared with the Western lands. The hon. member for Kennedy seemed to have an obsession with regard to rent. The Government did not fix the rent of selections; the land court fixed it.

Mr. MOORE: The Government appeal against the Land Court's decisions.

Mr. POLLOCK: The Government was entitled to appeal against a decision of the land court, if they thought the decision was unfair under all the circumstances. Even under the Fair Rents Act there was provision made for an appeal to the land court. Why should the Government not have power to appeal against what was sometimes manifestly a small rent? There was nothing in that to cavil at.

Mr. MOORE: The Land Court fixed the rent, and as soon as they fixed it the Government appealed.

Mr. POLLOCK: In many cases the rent fixed by the Land Court was so small as to warrant the Crown appealing. In many cases there had not been sufficient time to collect the evidence that should have been placed by the Crown before the Land Court. The fact remained that the one man who had been appointed by the Labour Government to the Land Court had fixed lower rentals than any of the judges previously appointed, and the decisions given by an ex-Labour member of the House—he referred to Mr. Hardacre—were the only decisions appealed against by the Crown. It was the judges of the Land Court who were appointed by past Governments who had charged what were supposed to be ridiculously high rentals. The Government were not responsible for that. It was no use the hon. member for Kennedy blaming the Government because the Land Court raised the rentals, when the Land Court was entirely independent. The Land Court was an independent body, and the hon. member for Kennedy dared not say outside that Chamber that any member of the Land Court was subject to dictation on the part of the Government.

Mr. FLETCHER: The court raised the rents after the Government passed the Land Acts Amendment Act.

Mr. POLLOCK: That was like a lot more of the statements by that impetuous young man. Before the Labour Government came into office the Land Court always had the power to raise rentals to whatever pitch it desired except in the case of certain selections that were protected by the 1910 Land Act. The root of the trouble was that the hon. member for Kennedy, and many others like him, were occupying the same class of country as adjoining selectors, and they were protected by the 1910 Act just in the same way as many of the large leaseholders were

protected—their rentals could not be raised more than 50 per cent. at each reappraisal period of ten years. When the Government removed that obstacle and gave power to the Land Court to fix a fair rental without any limitation for those selections and big pastoral leases that were previously protected, then, of course, the rentals were raised.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is what I said. It was the Land Acts Amendment Act that enabled them to do it.

Mr. POLLOCK: Of course, the passing of that Act in 1920 did enable the Land Court to charge a fair rental without any limitation; and what was wrong with that?

Mr. FLETCHER: It was repudiation.

Mr. POLLOCK: He did not care what the hon. member called it. He was not responsible for what the hon. member said, and he did not suppose the hon. member was responsible either. So far as that Act was concerned, it was time it was passed. In his own district he could quote at least 100 cases where selectors were separated merely by a wire fence from big pastoral leaseholders who were only paying one-third the rental paid by the selectors, and the big pastoral leaseholder could not be compelled to pay a fair rental for his land until the Government passed what was called the "repudiation" Act. That the selectors were not paying more than a fair rental was emphasised by the fact that for every block of land which was of any use for the purpose of carrying sheep or cattle that had been opened in any of the good districts of Western Queensland during the past six or eight years, there had been from 50 to 1,500 applicants—not only applicants who were willing to select that same class of land, but applicants who were willing to pay exactly the same rate that was paid by those poor, down-trodden selectors.

Mr. FLETCHER: Suppose you had a house for £1 a week for five years and the landlord came along and raised the rent to £2, if you had an agreement to pay £1 a week, what would you say to that?

Mr. POLLOCK: There was no such thing as an agreement in connection with those lands, and he had challenged hon. members opposite repeatedly to produce any written contract. It was merely a protection given to certain big leaseholders and certain favoured selectors by Act of Parliament repealable at any time during a trying period in the history of Queensland, when there was a drought, to tide them over a bad time, and when the necessity for that was removed, Mr. Denham wanted to alter the Act, and he was only prevented from altering it by the fact that the squatters supporting his party threatened to put the boot into him if he did alter it; and, in spite of that exercising of outside influence over the Liberals by their bosses—the squatters—they heard a lot about outside influence in connection with the Labour party.

At 8.15 p.m.,

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

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. member for Bulimba was in the Cabinet sitting behind Mr. Denham at the time, and approved of the introduction of the very same repudiation Act which he now condemned the present Government for bringing in. The hon. gentleman must have approved of it or it could not have been introduced. No one

[*Mr. Pollock.*]

could tell him that any landlord would allow any agreement to be made that would give a tenant at 10s. a week a house exactly as good as one next door for which the public were prepared to pay 30s. a week. If hon. members could show any contract, there would be some reason for the term "repudiation," but, as he had stated repeatedly, any man who held any purely statutory concession from the Government, if that concession was not based on sound and firm grounds, knew very well that a succeeding Government could alter it. If Parliament could not undo what a previous Parliament had done, as was done in the case of the Land Act, what would be the use of putting the Labour party out and putting another party in? If that was so, would not every Act of Parliament that was repealed or amended in future be repudiation? It would not be worth while having a change of Government unless they could bring about a change in the legislation.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: On that argument you could refuse to pay the interest on loans because there is a new Government.

Mr. POLLOCK: A Government might do that, too; but it was not an analogous case.

Mr. FLETCHER: You can amend Acts, but you cannot amend Acts which will involve breaking pledges.

Mr. POLLOCK: Every Act of Parliament—such as the Industrial Arbitration Act, the Workers' Dwellings Act, and the Workers' Accommodation Act—gave protection to some people. The alteration of those Acts would be repudiation in so far as it would remove the benefits conferred by them on certain people. Yet hon. gentlemen opposite stated that they would wipe out the Industrial Arbitration Act so far as it applied to certain industries. (Opposition dissent.)

Hon. W. H. BARNES: No one said that.

Mr. POLLOCK: Did hon. gentlemen opposite deny that they would repeal any Acts at all? If they would not repeal any Act, what was the use of their getting on the Treasury benches? What would the crowd who paid their election expenses say if hon. members opposite did not repeal any of the Acts passed by the present Government?

Mr. FLETCHER: We can correct the dishonourable acts of your Government.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! It is out of order to refer to "dishonourable acts of the Government."

Mr. FLETCHER: I mean "politically dishonourable."

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: It is out of order.

Mr. FLETCHER: Very well, I withdraw it.

Mr. POLLOCK: If members opposite did not repeal any Acts at all, what would be the good of getting over on the Government side? What would be the use of any party attaining the Treasury benches if they could not do the business the people wanted them to do? Parliament was supreme.

Mr. JONES: But Parliament should not have interfered with the limitation in the rent.

Mr. POLLOCK: That limitation was only statutory, and could be removed at any time by Parliament. They might say that, because a publican paid for the lease of an hotel for a number of years and the Government intro-

duced 6 o'clock closing, that that would be considered an act of repudiation because it would depreciate the value of the lease.

Mr. FLETCHER: The publican knows all the circumstances when he takes over the lease.

Mr. POLLOCK: So did the squatter. For ten years the proposal to repeal that infamous provision in the Land Act had been in the Labour party's platform, and yet the public returned the Labour party to power with the assurance that they would carry that platform into effect when they got the opportunity.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member for Gregory tried to make out that the Government were returned to power to remove the limitation of rent in the Land Act just because it was in the party's platform. The people voted in favour of retaining the Legislative Council, so they might just as well say that, because of that, the people were against the Government and did not want the Labour platform carried out. There was just as much argument one way as the other.

Mr. POLLOCK: Are you in favour of abolishing the Legislative Council?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, the way the Council was constituted at present. He drew the attention of the Committee to the spread of prickly-pear, Noogoora burr, and other pests referred to in the reports of various officers of the Lands Department, all of whom referred to the cost of eradication as being too high. The occupation license was becoming a popular form of tenure in Queensland, yet it was the worst tenure they could possibly have for growing pests. The spread of prickly-pear was having a disastrous effect on the State, and, if anything could be done to check it, they should do it. To-day there were 7,000,000 acres less under occupation than in 1915. That showed that it was unpopular for people to go into the country; they had too many pests to contend with. On page 107 of the report of the Lands Department, he noticed the following passage in the report of the Land Commissioner for the Cloncurry, Normanton, and Burketown districts:—

"The crime of cattle-stealing seems to be much more prevalent in these districts than in any other part of the State, and concerted action by the graziers for the protection of the herds has resulted in the formation of a general mustering camp which travels over the district searching for stolen stock, which when recovered are returned to their rightful owners. This mustering camp has been responsible for many convictions for illegal stock transactions, and, although hopelessly inadequate to clean up the district, it has already accomplished a great deal of good. I cannot emphasise too strongly the necessity of taking a serious view of the cattle-thieving, because intending selectors have refused to invest in Cloncurry selections on account of the spread of stock-thieving, and land values have depreciated for the same cause."

If they were going to have a preventible pest or disease of that kind spread throughout Queensland in addition to the other pests that the man on the land had to contend with, it was time the Government paid some attention to it. Special police protection should be sent out to see if it could not be stamped out.

Mr. Moore.

With regard to perpetual leases, whether the Government believed in that tenure or not, the fact remained that the selectors did not like it. They were prepared to take up land under freehold tenure. The most successful land settlement in Queensland was the homestead settlement on scrub lands, because it enabled a man to go on the land with the smallest amount of machinery possible. All he required was an axe and a hoe to make a start and get a quick return.

In regard to the prickly-pear selections, he knew that men would not take them up under leasehold tenure; in fact, only 33 per cent. of those who took up those selections last year fulfilled the conditions. It was time the Government changed their policy in regard to that class of selection, at any rate. If the adoption of the freehold tenure would increase the number of selectors the Government ought to give it a trial. He had seen the efforts of an individual increase the value of a perpetual lease and cause the rent to be increased. An individual started a cheese factory and so improved the value of the surrounding land that the rent was increased to a higher rate. Before that the land was held under occupation license; but when it was offered under the perpetual lease tenure, the efforts of the individual had increased the value of the lease and a higher rent was asked for it. The community did not create it. That man created [8.30 p.m.] it and enabled the Government to get rid of other land round about. That sort of tenure discouraged the people who went into the country. Every day they saw instances of people having gone on to virgin land, put their energy into it, and increased its value; and then, when the revaluation came along every two or three years, the value went up.

There did not seem to be a public policy to prevent the spread of prickly-pear. Every man got a reduction in valuation when his land became infested with pear, and it was an encouragement for him to let it grow. There would come a time when the pear would take possession of Queensland and drive the settlers out. It was said that close settlement would stop it. On the Darling Downs he could see it creeping in year by year and pushing the settlers out. It was a most serious thing to see the land going out of cultivation, and the present method for preventing the spread of the pear was ineffective. It was time that mere political fads should be cast aside. They should say that on this class of country they were prepared to try a different policy and see if they could not stamp it out. They were gradually reaching the position when their lands would be absolutely useless. The endeavour should be to get as many people as possible to settle on the land and make it productive, and prevent the spread of these disastrous pests.

The TREASURER: The pest became the greatest danger under your Government.

Mr. MOORE: Recriminations would not assist in a solution of the problem. They knew it was covering a greater area every year. It had to be checked some time. Whether it was introduced or was allowed to spread during the term of office of another Government did not alter the serious position that existed to-day. If, by giving men advantages in regard to tenure, it would check the spread of the pear, by all means

[Mr. Moore.]

let them have those advantages and see if such a change of policy would benefit the State.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*): The vote had been criticised for a long time, although the criticism had been very mild.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You think you merited something worse?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. He was astonished at not hearing the usual tirade of blackguarding. Some of the criticisms had been merely a whine.

Mr. BRAND: There is no whine about freehold tenure; it is pretty sincere.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There was a whine up at Jimbour a couple of years ago until he relieved the situation; also at Maryvale, in the Warwick district. A large number of people were going to be tossed out because they held freehold instead of leasehold.

Mr. WARREN: Because it was overcapitalised.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had had nothing to do with the overcapitalisation, but a bad excuse was better than none. Another cry was that the department were doing nothing in regard to the prickly-pear. He would show that they were doing something. He quite agreed with the hon. member for Warwick that the man who had clean country and did not keep it clean did not deserve to have it. The department were doing everything in their power to compel those men to keep their country clean.

Mr. FLETCHER: How is it that it is spreading to such an alarming extent?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: A lot of it was on unoccupied lands. He hoped hon. members were not foolish enough to take notice of the usual cry of the hon. member for Burnett that it was spreading at the rate of 1,000,000 acres a year. That sort of cry was all right as long as they could get people to believe it.

Mr. BRAND: At what rate is it spreading?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had not kept track of it during the last couple of years. (Opposition laughter.) In the Nanango district, which was badly infested, the report of the Commissioner stated—

"Prickly-pear is bad in parts of this district, and several applications were made for extension of leases in consideration of the destruction of that pest. There is no doubt that neglect by previous lessees was the contributing cause of the applications in most of the cases dealt with."

Regarding the Warwick district, the Commissioner's report stated—

"With regard to prickly-pear, the conditions were fairly well performed in a large number of cases, but many selectors were hampered by the difficulty in obtaining arsenic, and in the early part of the year by the dry season, and there were also many instances of neglect, which necessitated the issue of a great many notices under section 143, and a number of show-cause cases."

The only bad district they had in Queensland was the Dalby Land Commissioner's district.

Mr. MORGAN: That is the only district that is all pear, but there are any number of other districts which have a terrible lot.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was so. Regarding the Charleville district, the report stated—

"The whole of the district east of Charleville is more or less heavily infested with prickly-pear. Owing to the dry weather, very little in the way of pear-clearing was done in the early part of the year; but after the rains, and when the selectors were relieved of the necessity of attending to their stock, good progress in clearing was made."

The report regarding the St. George district stated—

"Pear-clearing conditions have been fairly well carried out, and some few selectors have been called upon to show cause; but forfeiture has been waived on their undertaking to fulfil their conditions in the future."

Paragraphs such as those were repeated throughout the whole of the report. It would be seen that the department was attending to that part of the business.

Mr. CORSER: The settler is.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Why did the settler allow it to grow? He was compelled to clear it.

Mr. CORSER: You do not compel yourself to clear it off Crown land.

At 8.40 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: If they read the report of the Under Secretary, they would see the good work that was being done in regard to prickly-pear.

The hon. member for Burnett and others had referred to Mr. Temple Clerk. He (Mr. Coyne) was very sorry that Mr. Temple Clerk was unfit to be continued in the service except for a very short time, because he and the Government appreciated very much the good work that that officer had done in endeavouring to deal with prickly-pear. Because of that appreciation of his good work, the Government had allowed him to remain in the service two years after he had reached the retiring age. Mr. Temple Clerk was practically blind already, so that he did not think hon. members could say that the Government were not treating him fairly generously.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Are the cochineal insects a success?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The cochineal insect destroyed only the *Opuntia monacantha*.

Mr. CORSER: Thousands and thousands of pounds' worth of good was done by it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were endeavouring to get an insect or fungoid pest to attack the *Opuntia inermis*, and if they could achieve success they would have accomplished something valuable. The hon. member for Burnett said that they were not doing anything to assist people on pear land. He forgot that in 1916 they increased the term of their leases from twenty-five to forty years.

Mr. CORSER: Because they could not pay under the old conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Because they did not want to turn them off

the land. In the first place, the Government the hon. member supported gave them a fifteen years' tenure.

Mr. CORSER: I always supported a forty-years' term.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then they increased it to twenty-five years, and this Government came to the rescue, as they had done in many other cases, and made it forty years.

Hon. members had been endeavouring to injure the Government by condemning all soldier settlements. Not one good word had been said for soldier settlements by any hon. member of the Opposition during the whole afternoon.

Mr. CORSER: We are thinking of the soldier.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were thinking of injuring the Government; but they were doing infinite damage to the soldier, because they discouraged him in every possible way by telling him that he could not possibly make a success.

Mr. CORSER: We never said that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Murrumbidgee said it.

Mr. WARREN: I never said anything of the sort.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member had never said anything else. The "Western Star," a paper published in Roma, which was totally opposed to the Government, had evidently sent one of their staff to report on the Mount Hutton settlement; and he would quote part of an article which was the result, headed "Mount Hutton Lands; Progress of the Settlement."

"The problem of the best method to be adopted in the development of the State's resources has always been a burning question with the Government of the day since Queensland was proclaimed a separate colony or State. Many ideas have been given effect to with, on the whole, only partial success. The problem of the development of the land in order to obtain its maximum capacity for production has not yet been solved, but the keynote of success has apparently been struck in connection with the settlement of the Mount Hutton lands. . . . Crops of all descriptions are being planted, and the land has been proved to be capable of growing all kinds of produce, including maize, wheat, potatoes, cotton, and fruit, and every variety of vegetable of first-class quality, and it also has excellent natural grasses for stock. Ringbarking is being conducted with energy, and the whole district is humming with activity. There are about 440 settlers on the estate, including the returned soldiers, and the district has a population of about 900. The Lands Department has made a very creditable effort to develop this portion of the public estate by inducing a hardy, virile, and industrious class of farmer to make his home there. The result has been that this country, which three years ago was the haunt of the emu, dingo, and kangaroo, is gradually becoming dotted with happy and progressive homesteads."

Mr. FORDE: When I was up there they were all well satisfied.

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The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were well satisfied. The hon. member for Pittsworth, or the hon. member for Murrumbidgee, said that the Government's system of land settlement was forcing people from the country into the city. One would think to listen to hon. members that Queensland stood out as singular in that respect. Hon. members would agree that one State in Australia above all others was bitterly governed by a Tory Administration—that was, South Australia—yet, in face of that, there were considerably more people in the city of Adelaide than in the rest of South Australia.

Mr. MORGAN: South Australia has only one port, and we have seven or eight.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is not a fair comparison at all.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Of course, it was a fair comparison. The only inference to be drawn from the remarks of the hon. member for Murrumbidgee—although he did not actually say it—was that the Beerburum settlement was doomed.

Mr. WARREN: What rot!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was the greatest pessimist he had ever seen, either in the Chamber or upon a deputation.

Mr. WARREN: Why, you are worse than I am myself. You will not attend to the needs of the soldier settlements because you are a pessimist.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Let the hon. member look to-morrow at the answers he would give to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, and he would see whether he was attending to the needs of the settlers or not. In July, 1919, the Commonwealth Government evidently instructed their local Repatriation Department to send delegates to Beerburum to see how the settlement was getting on, and he proposed to read from their report, published in the Brisbane "Daily Mail." The gentlemen who visited the settlement were the chief inspector of the department, Mr. R. Ovington, and Mr. Claude Henderson—

"Mr. Ovington and Mr. Claude Henderson, in passing the time of day with another settler, Mr. B. J. Long—"

Mr. WARREN: Why, he has left his house and home. You are on the wrong track. (Opposition laughter.)

"formerly of the 15th Battalion, asked in an approved military manner, 'Any complaints?' Mr. Long replied, 'No; and I want to say that, although I have tried my luck in other States, this is the best proposition I ever took on. I reckon soon to clear £10 a week from my block.' The wives of settlers express themselves as being contented with life at Beerburum, and the only complaint came from a man who pointed out that the name Beerburum was a misnomer. 'We haven't a "pub" for 9 miles,' he said, 'and, although it is a blessing in disguise, the place should be renamed. Why not call it Ginger-Beerburum?' Mr. Ovington promised to forward his suggestion to the proper quarter."

Mr. WARREN: What about my charge?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was ill-advised when he brought that up to-day. He would not like his (Mr. Coyne's) reply.

Mr. WARREN: I do not mind your reply.

[Hon. J. H. Coyne.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The children who were referred to as going hungry to school were the children of two settlers on Beerburum who were supplied with maintenance by him, and on receipt of that maintenance they went down to Caboolture and filled themselves up with beer, and then carted home bottles of beer bought with the balance of the sustenance money. Then the hon. member wanted to blame the Government.

Mr. WARREN: You are to blame for giving sustenance to that sort of man.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He stopped it.

Mr. WARREN: What were your officers doing to allow that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member should have made inquiries to find out more about it.

Mr. WARREN: That man told me after the deputation that it was a genuine case.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When the man came along to give him the name of the person, that man made a joke of it.

Mr. WARREN: He did not make a joke of it when he said it there.

At 8.45 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would have made a joke of it only he (Mr. Coyne) told him quickly that he would insist upon getting the name. He knew of no one who was going hungry at Beerburum unless it was through his own fault.

The hon. member for Pittsworth had referred to something with which he agreed, and that was that it was necessary to provide water before actual settlement took place. He had believed in that for a good many years, but, unfortunately, like a good many other things that the Government would like to do, they were unable to do it because of financial stress. It cost a good deal of money to do that. He was hoping, with the aid of his colleagues, to bring in a scheme that would enable them in the future, more especially where they had five, six, seven, or eight holdings coming up for resumption, to supply water.

Another matter was the purchasing of land near the railway. That was a very costly business too. The amount of settlement that would result from the investment of the loan raised in New York would not be very much if they purchased land alongside the railway.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Would it not be cheaper to do that than to place men right away from the railway line and then build railways to them afterwards?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. Hon. members opposite objected to the leasehold tenure and the perpetual lease, which was just as secure a tenure as freehold, because, if the Government wanted to resume it to-morrow, they would find it just as difficult to resume perpetual lease land as any freehold land in Queensland.

Mr. CORSER: On the reappraisalment you could make the resumption by taxing the man off the land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who would tax him?

Mr. CORSER: The Land Court.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What had he to do with the Land Court?

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman has something to do with the court that fixed the reappraisements of pastoral leases.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That showed that there was no alliance between the Land Court and himself or the Government. The thing would be impossible. It was no use condemning the leasehold tenure and at the same time hon. members opposite telling them that they should repurchase estates and let them out as leaseholds again. Where was the consistency in that?

Mr. MORGAN: Let them out as freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: And buy them back again later on?

Mr. MORGAN: There was no necessity for that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That was what had been done. Some freeholds had to be purchased back in order to get decent land for the soldiers. The hon. member for Pittsworth referred to the supervisor on Cecil Plains, and regretted very much that a man who had been for a number of years on the station was not chosen as supervisor. He did not know whom the hon. member referred to, but he knew that the department thought a great deal of their supervisor on Cecil Plains.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Nobody has said anything about the supervisor.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: When he got the "Hansard" proofs tomorrow he would know that the hon. member did say something about the supervisor.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That man is not the man to be put on Cecil Plains, because he knows nothing about that class of land.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would say that he did. That man had a very long training at Gatton College.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That does not say that he knows Cecil Plains.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That man had experience on the Darling Downs.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Where?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He could not tell the hon. member the exact spot.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: What is the use of saying so if you do not know the exact spot. He did not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The gentleman referred to by the hon. member had never seen any cultivation carried out on Cecil Plains all the time he was there.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That man saw 2,500 acres cultivated at Jondaryan year after year.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: That is not Cecil Plains.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It is the same class of country.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Would not a man only a few miles away know something about it?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Who?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Captain Binnie.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He was not there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was at Gatton.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member also stated that Captain Binnie purchased cattle at £32 a head.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He purchased a milking cow. I will give the name of the man he purchased it from and the agent he purchased it through.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: While a cow might be worth £32, he thought that was too high a price to pay for cattle for soldiers.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That price was ridiculously high for the class of cattle that were sold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was going to make inquiries to see if that was correct. The supervisor did not purchase cattle unless the settler was with him. He would say unhesitatingly that that price was too high for soldiers who had a limited amount of capital to buy stock.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They may have been with him, but they did not know whether he purchased them or not.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Port Curtis referred to the matter of carrying out surveys before resumptions were made.

Mr. FLETCHER: If necessary.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He did not think it was legal for them to go on to a property before resumption or within a certain time of resumption. It would be a very costly proceeding. People's minds changed as to suitable areas in particular districts, and what might be regarded as a suitable area to-day might not be considered so in two or three years. Surveying was a very costly business now, and, if a resumption could not take place for two or three years, the money that was expended would be gone for nothing.

Mr. FLETCHER: I referred to land that was available, not to land not yet available.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They were dealing with land that was available.

Mr. FLETCHER: Some time ago you were short of surveyors.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member for Mirani had requested that there should be settlement before a railway was built; but it had been preached by hon. members opposite for many years past and by the people generally that railways should precede settlement.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: We have always advocated that.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Then, the hon. member could not agree with the hon. member for Mirani, who wanted settlement before a railway was built.

The hon. member for Gregory referred to the lands having been cut up in small areas in a number of places. He agreed with the hon. member that land should not be opened up in areas which were too small. He would always rather see a man in grazing country with 1,000 acres too much than 10 acres too little. If a man had too small an area, however much he struggled, he could not make a

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living on it; the only possibility of making a living was by shooting and trapping in addition.

Mr. JONES: They cannot all do that.

Mr. MORGAN: That is the trouble at Mount Hutton.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It could not be the trouble at Mount Hutton, because they had got from over 700 acres there. Hon. members opposite had suggested that freehold would increase the number of settlers; but the Government stood on sound ground when they advocated the retention of the leasehold system.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: It is all right in theory, but it does not work out in practice.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: One of the leading statesmen of the British Empire, Lord Bryce, a man of world-wide experience, advocated leasehold in preference to freehold; and no less a statesman than the late William Ewart Gladstone, who was on several occasions Prime Minister of Great Britain, was in favour of leasehold.

Mr. CORSER: He was never a selector.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He was a selector. He had a farm of his own, and a forest as well. Mr. Gladstone not only said that leasehold was good, but that, if he had his way, he would expropriate all the land that was held under freehold in England, because it was unsound in principle.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Why do all the tenant farmers in England want freehold, and why do they keep on wanting it?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Reference had been made that afternoon to one of his predecessors, the late Hon. J. T. Bell. That gentleman stated on the floor of the House that, if he had his way, he would revoke what had been done in the past, and he would not alienate one square inch of land in Queensland.

Mr. MORGAN: He settled more men on freehold than any other Secretary for Public Lands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He had to administer the laws as he found them with the Tory party behind him. The hon. member was a member of that party then. Mr. Bell had to administer the laws as they were, or give up the job. Freehold was a very fine thing for the land shark; there was no doubt that it was far better than cattle-dealing.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It is now. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Or at any other time; because, when a land agent came along with a nice tale and tickled the ears of the groundling who was looking for land, he made a nice thing out of him, and did not care about him after.

Mr. G. P. BARNES: You have got freehold.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Where?

Mr. G. P. BARNES: Out at Coorparoo.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He would like to know where it was.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you think that every man who has freehold is a land jobber?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. The people who had got freeholds were

[Hon. J. H. Coyne.]

not land jobbers at all; it was the people who wheedled them into buying freeholds who were the land jobbers.

Mr. MORGAN: Who wheedled the Secretary for Agriculture into taking a freehold?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: He supposed he was foolish enough to be influenced. He noticed that the hon. member for Murilla had not put his money into freehold.

Mr. MORGAN: I have not got a foot of freehold land in Australia.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The hon. member was too wise for that. He was under the care of a paternal Government, and was getting along very nicely. As nothing was really said in connection with the vote amounting to adverse criticism, he would resume his seat.

Question put and passed.

DISTRICT OFFICES.

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

“That £76,601 be granted for ‘District Offices.’”

There was an increase of £3,841 in the vote, brought about almost entirely by increases of salary under the Arbitration Court award. The item for increased cost of living in country districts had been increased by £250.

Question put and passed.

FORESTRY OFFICE.

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

“That £44,471 be granted for ‘Forestry Office.’”

There was a net decrease of £5,759. The principal decrease occurred in the item for harvesting and marketing forest produce, the provision last year being in excess of the requirements. He did not think there was anything of importance that he could mention in connection with the vote, but he would be prepared to answer any questions that might be asked.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): There were several State forests established for the purpose of conserving timber in or near his electorate, and in some of those localities good work was being performed. On some of those State forests, on one at Yeulba in particular, there was a great amount of prickly-pear. Unless that forest was cleared of the pear, it would soon become so thick that it would be impossible to get the timber out. There was a great deal of cypress pine, which was so hedged in with prickly-pear that it would be very difficult to make use of the pine. The same thing would apply in respect of the forests that had been appointed in the prickly-pear areas. It was useless to establish forests in those areas for the conservation of timber unless the prickly-pear was eradicated. He also wished to refer to the fact that a sawmill in connection with the State forest had been established in the Mount Hutton district. He had been told on very good authority that it was a mistake to put the mill in that locality, as the timber was too scattered. At the present time there was a certain quantity of timber close to the mill, but it would soon be cut out, and then, although there was a big quantity of timber in the district, the cost of cartage to

the railway station would be so great that timber would have to remain at a very high price before the mill could be a success.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Immediately after starting our mill at Injune Creek timber prices dropped 3s. per 100 superficial feet.

Mr. MORGAN: He hoped the Minister would see that the money expended in connection with the Yeulba Forest Reserve would be protected. He was well satisfied with the work that had been done in regard to reafforestation in Queensland, and he certainly thought the Forestry Department was doing good work in that direction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are clearing the pear in the Yeulba forest.

Mr. WALKER (*Cooroora*): This was one of the most important votes that had to be passed by the Committee, more particularly on account of the way in which the Government had taken up the question of reafforestation. They were voting an enormous sum of money for reafforestation in Queensland, and he must congratulate the Minister and the Director of Forests on the very fine report submitted to Parliament this year. It was certainly much better than the reports they had had in the past, and much better than those published in the other States of Australia. In going through the report, he noticed that extensive new departures had been made in regard to the planting of trees and new ideas had been adopted. There was not the slightest doubt that in time to come the work of the department would bear fruit. The lines on which the department had worked appeared to be satisfactory, although he supposed there was no member in the Committee who was competent to give an opinion except from a bushman's point of view, and he thought it would be a good thing if the Minister were to extend an invitation to members on both sides of the Chamber to visit some of those State forests at a favourable opportunity during the year, so that they could see what was being done.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: I shall be very pleased to do so. I am expecting a forestry conference in Brisbane early next year, and probably that will be a suitable time to invite members of the conference and members of Parliament to visit one of the State forests, preferably Brooloo.

Mr. WALKER: Although there were some big forest reserves in his electorate, unfortunately, for some unknown reason, he had never received an official invitation to visit those areas. Although he recognised that the policy adopted was a good one, he was inclined to think that there was a little too much theory throughout the whole business. Although he had not had an official invitation to visit the various forest stations, on two or three occasions when riding round he had visited the various areas. In going through one reserve the other day on horseback, it appeared to him that the work in that forest was a waste of money. They were felling a lot of the undergrowth, which eventually would come up thicker than ever, because it was a class of country that could not be kept clean. Then, again, in the Imbil district, although he had only seen a small portion of the work there, in most cases there was too much theory attached to the whole business and not enough practice. The chances were that those in charge of the

forest were men who were not accustomed to Queensland conditions.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: They are all working under the directions of the Director.

Mr. WALKER: In his opinion, the Director was Americanising the whole business a little too much. No doubt, the Director had a full grasp of the whole question, but, in reorganising, the whole system appeared to be Americanised to a great extent, and he would like to see a little more colonialism introduced. However, the department was doing particularly good work. They were not only growing timber, but were also starting to haul it, and eventually it was intended to cut it up.

In his opinion, they were going a little too far in that direction. If the department wanted to bring the timber in on the most economic lines and under the best system, if they would take his advice, they would leave the whole thing to the local timber-getter, who knew most about the industry, and the department would get a better return.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There is a very outstanding objection to that; and that is that the local timber-getter only wants to get the best logs, and he does not care what part of the forest he destroys.

Mr. WALKER: All that could be controlled by regulation. There was no occasion to open large areas to any timber-getter. The Government could give him a small area and could see that he pulled the whole of the logs in that area including the tops. If the Government were going into the question of buying horsefeed and the hire of bullock teams, they were on the wrong track altogether. He would advise the department to allow the timber-getters to work out their own destinies. They knew the weather conditions, and they knew exactly when they should knock off, and when the bullocks should be spelled. They could do that far more economically and far better than the Government did it to-day. The Government were spending a certain sum on road-making. He understood that, when the Government started to collect royalties, the money would be spent on the shire roads; but, unfortunately, that policy was not carried out. The teams carrying the Government timber did more damage to the roads than any others. Probably that was a question of policy and had nothing to do with the Forestry Department, but it would be far better to leave it to the bullock-driver to work out his own difficulties. If he required a bridge or some other assistance, some help should be given him. Brooloo was the biggest State forest they had in Queensland, and he had accompanied the hon. member for Gympie to see if some areas of timber reserves could not be thrown open for selection. That might appear inconsistent, but some of the timber reserves were unsuitable for afforestation and should be thrown open for selection. There were thirty-two timber reserves in the Gympie district with an area of 30,000 acres. They were marked out thirty years ago as State reserves or timber reserves, but the time had come when they should be reclassified, and all the land that was unsuitable for reafforestation should be thrown open for selection. There was an enormous tract of good country on the western side of Gympie, towards Brooloo; and it could be thrown open in areas of from 20 to 100 acres for each individual.

Mr. Walker.]

They had a large population on the western side of Gympie, and there were still a large number of people waiting to take up land there. The Government should give them the opportunity of doing so. He understood that at the Interstate Conference it was agreed that 6,000,000 acres should be kept for reafforestation in Queensland. That seemed to be a big area of land to keep in abeyance. In yesterday's "Daily Mail" he noticed that the Government were exporting log timber to the South. What right had the Government to export log timber when they talked about conserving forests in Queensland. There were hundreds of men out of work in Queensland, and, instead of exporting the logs, they should have them cut in Queensland and send the finished article South. There was a slump in the timber trade at present owing to the royalties charged by the department. The royalties did not come down when other prices came down. During the war the royalties were increased the same as other things, and that was quite right, but, now that they found that timber was almost an unsaleable article in Queensland, they should reduce the royalty in sympathy with the price for sawn timber. If they did that, they would give more employment to timber men now out of work. It would also give more work for the railways, which were now running on a reduced scale.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: There are no royalties in Queensland to-day.

MR. WALKER: They were commonly called royalties because that was a colonialism. Perhaps it was an Americanism.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: The Director is a good Australian, and he does not introduce Americanisms.

MR. WALKER: Well, they could call it a levy. All he knew was, that the price was increased by 17s. or 18s. per 100 superficial feet in his district. They could see the enormous price a man would have to pay for each 1,000 feet of timber to build a house. It was of no use the Director sitting down in his office and thinking he could carry on by receiving information from any particular district. He had to look at the commercial side of the question. It was far better to reduce the royalty 50 or 60 per cent. than to allow so many men to be idle. In the Central district the Director had already met with a certain amount of trouble. He should go into the district himself, and not try to conduct affairs by means of correspondence. There was a difference of opinion between the men and those in charge, as he could tell by a letter he (Mr. Walker) had received. The Government should take some action in regard to the royalty question.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What you call royalty we have reduced by 8s. per 100 feet in the last few months.

MR. WALKER: If the Minister reduced it still more, it would be better for the timber trade. The price should be reduced in keeping with the price in the world's market. They had always advocated that on the Opposition side, and, now that they had so many men depending on it for a living, they had an opportunity to reduce the price and give employment to more men. He noticed the revenue made out of the forestry business last year amounted to £61,613.

[Mr. Walker.]

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We are keeping two townships going in your electorate.

MR. WALKER: He recognised all the good that there was in the report. But they received a record revenue out of Queensland amounting to £61,613, while the sum of £59,000 was put back into reafforestation. It would be better if the revenue received was reduced by half, say, by £31,000, than have so many men idle. It would give more trade to the railways. In regard to the State sawmills, although they came under another vote, they were closely allied to the timber business. He thought the State sawmills should compete on fair lines with the local sawmills in purchasing timber, delivering timber, and fulfilling orders. If they did that, hon. members could see which proposition paid the best. He congratulated the Director of Forests on the splendid report he had submitted.

MR. TAYLOR (Windsor): Of all the reports that came before them the Forestry report was one of the best. That which they now had spoke of a number of [9.30 p.m.] things having been accomplished and of what was going to be accomplished in the future so far as their forests were concerned. Forestry was an enterprise that the Government had a perfect right to embark on, because, in the first place, the Government owned the necessary lands, and in the second place, private persons would not wait fifteen or twenty years, or longer, for a return. It was gratifying to see the progress that had been made during the last few years in this particular activity. The Minister and the officers associated with the Forestry Department were to be congratulated on the work they were doing. In the first portion of the report he noticed that the department were contemplating the planting of camphor trees in order that the importation of camphor might be stopped, and they might be able to produce the camphor which was at present brought from Eastern countries.

He quite agreed with the remarks of the hon. member for Coorooora with regard to the cutting and hauling of the timber. That was a different matter altogether, and the department and the Minister would be well advised if they did not launch out too much in that direction. With regard to cutting up timber before it left the State, when they had an exportable surplus they were to a certain extent in the hands of the buyers, and, if the buyers insisted on having the timber in the log they had to supply it in the log. There might be reasons for the preference of the Southern buyers for the log. The main thing was to get hold of the business and employ as much labour as they could in connection with the Forestry Department, enlarge its scope, and supply the demands of Australia as far as they could.

He was rather surprised to see one remark in the report. He had held the idea that all sorts of waste lands could be utilised to a very great extent in the production of the timber, but, according to the officers of the department, that was not the case. They said they wanted fairly good land near a railway, and it must have certain other conditions before it could be utilised successfully in the production of timber. He felt that had there been in existence thirty years ago a policy in regard to forestry similar

to that which was in existence to-day, they would not have had to go to America for a loan. Probably in ten or fifteen years the taxation which pressed so heavily upon the people now would be reduced considerably.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): He understood they were building a wooden tramline into one of the State forests to get the timber out. At the Yarraman Mill they had built a wooden tramline, but it proved unsatisfactory, and had to be taken out. It was found to be far cheaper to put down a line of steel rails. When they had the experience of a large mill like Yarraman, it seemed rather a stupid thing to repeat the mistake with one of their State forests. He wanted to call attention to that portion of the report which showed that this industry was suffering from exactly the same trouble as practically every other industry—the enormous cost of production. At page 75, the report stated—

“In order to supply the annual needs in raw material of the timber industry of Queensland, a rail side zone up to 20 miles in width must be drawn upon. The average distance of road haulage is probably 10 miles and of rail freighting 120 miles. The average cost of felling, hauling, loading, and training logs from this average distance, at the rates current in 1920, was about 13s. 6d. per 100 super feet.”

That seemed tremendously high. At the bottom of the page further light was thrown on the matter in the following paragraph—

“As the price of timber rose, so also had harvesting and marketing costs. As the price of timber fell, however, the costs of production remained fixed at the maximum attained, by reason of the promulgation during the year of the Arbitration Court award for forestry employees. This award prescribed that logging teamsters should be paid a haulage rate which would return them £12 10s. per working week.”

That was a pretty high rate.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Do you know they are demanding £5 a day in my electorate?

Mr. MOORE: He did not doubt they would demand £10 a day if they thought they could get it. Where these high rates were paid, it did not mean they worked the whole of the week. They took a load in and then had two or three days off. That, in a great measure, was causing the high cost of timber. The report went on to say, after the paragraph he had first quoted—

“To this sum must be added the purchase price of the standing tree, usually styled stumpage or royalty, and representing the cost of reproduction. It is safe to say that the basic all-round cost of delivered logs to Brisbane mills was 16s. per 100 super feet. The market, however, offered only 12s. 6d. for knotty pine logs, or less than the average cost of production.”

When they found that the cost had gone up to such an extent it was a moot point whether, with the short supplies of timber, it was good policy to make a fuss and see that a very high duty was put on to prevent the American timber coming in. The better policy would have been not to have exploited the forests of the State to the fullest extent, but to have taken advantage of the foreign

timber which was coming in to supply people who wanted to build a cheaper class of house. After all, there would not be a great deal of surplus timber for many years in America. In the last Forestry report it was estimated that in a few years America would not be able to supply its own requirements.

When they could get Oregon pine landed in Brisbane for 20s. per 100, it seemed rather a pity, when the cost of production of their own timber was so high, that they did not allow the people here to have the advantage of that cheap timber, and at the same time conserve their own. In the previous report to the one they were discussing, the director pointed out that the supply of timber in Queensland would not last many years unless very extensive forestry operations were undertaken. When they knew the condition of the building trade because of the high prices of local timber, it seemed that it would have been far better policy to use only sufficient of their Queensland timber to make enough money for re-afforestation purposes, and get the cheap timber from overseas while it lasted. They would then have been in a better position when the time came to use the State timber, when the cost of production would have been lowered, and in the meantime it would have been a great advantage to those who wanted to erect houses, and at the same time would have conserved to a great extent the supplies of the State. When one considered that the price of timber in the log at Brisbane was 8s. 6d. in June, 1919, 25s. 6d. in June, 1920, 27s. 6d. in September, 1920, and 24s. 6d. in June, 1921, they could understand how difficult it had been for people to build houses. And one must remember that the Forestry Department was not getting all the advantage they would really appear to be receiving. The people who got the advantage were those who purchased areas of timber years ago at very low rates; and the Forestry Department was keeping prices up for them. The Price Fixing Commissioner, and not the sawmills, fixed the prices of timber, and, if the Commissioner found that the price in the log was lowered, he calculated the price of haulage and so on and lowered the price accordingly. The difference between what they called royalty or stumpage of 16s. and the price of the log in Brisbane of 24s. 6d. was 8s. 6d., and, if that took place in regard to any other commodity, they would call it profiteering.

Mr. FOLLY: What about the loss of 40 per cent. that takes place?

Mr. MOORE: That made it even worse. That profit added a very big increase to the price of a house. It seemed to him that the Forestry Department was rather grasping. They made £51,000 last year, and the people who wanted to build houses paid it. In view of the difficulty in securing houses, the slump in the building trade and the dire effects of the Fair Rents Act, he questioned whether it was wise for the department to go in for a log-selling campaign, when the profit was such a big one. He quite agreed that the report was a good one and the policy of the department was excellent, but they worked in Government style—they wanted to take everything and give nothing. Where timber was hauled, the Forestry Department threw all the onus of the upkeep of roads on the shire councils; they forgot the amount

Mr. Moore.]

of damage that was done. The council to which he belonged had a great deal of trouble.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: We have treated them very generously.

Mr. MOORE: They were always hearing of the generosity of the Government; but he had never been able to discover it. Some years ago £7,000 was put on the Estimates for assistance to councils in making roads, but they never got a penny of it. When the State forests became a commercial proposition, their council put on men to make a road, but they were told it was none of their business, although, when they had got all the timber off, they said, "Now you might go on with it." The explanation was that previously they had allowed to the councils a portion of the timber on the roads they made to compensate them. The ratepayers did not get any advantage out of a purely timber road; the teamsters only benefited. It was all very well to point to the number of teams, and calculate the wheel tax that might be collected. His experience of collecting a wheel tax from their timber haulers had not been a very happy one. They were most difficult men to catch. In actual experience one got about 10 per cent. of the revenue he expected. In view of the revenue the Forestry Department received, it was only fair that they should see that the purely timber roads were maintained, or allow a certain amount to the councils to do it.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): He was very pleased to hear the remarks of the hon. member for Aubigny. He thought it only right that the revenue from forestry, particularly when returned soldiers were employed in the service, should go towards re-establishing their forests. In 1919-20 their revenue from forests was £123,048, of which £70,000 was reinvested in forestry, whilst in 1920-21 the revenue was £165,000, of which only £50,000 was spent in reafforestation. The sum of £60,000 was granted by the Commonwealth Government to the Forestry Branch to be utilised in the repatriation of returned soldiers.

Mr. FRY: Did they spend it?

Mr. CORSER: No, only 70 per cent. of it was spent. What had the Government done with the other 30 per cent.?

Mr. FOLEY: Have a look at page 88 of the report.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman should look at his new communistic platform. They knew perfectly well that in the platform that was adopted here about a fortnight ago—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. gentleman must discuss the vote for the Forestry Branch.

Mr. CORSER: He thought it would assist the Forestry Branch, because they would have forests growing up where once poor settlers tried to live. Only 70 per cent. of the money that had been supplied by the Commonwealth Government had been utilised.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You are entirely wrong.

Mr. CORSER: Urgent forestry works had been undertaken in doing a little reafforestation, fixing up roads to their new forests, and the organisation of forests in the planting of trees, and routine work. That was

[*Mr. Moore.*

undertaken with the money advanced. He wanted to know from the Minister what had become of the balance of the money which had been supplied by the Commonwealth for a specific purpose.

Mr. FRY: Were they investing the money derived as revenue from forestry in forestry, or was it going into revenue?

Mr. CORSER: The sum of £165,000 was received in revenue last year, and they found that £110,000 was not placed back in their forests. The Minister had taken a particular interest in forestry.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: £110,000 was put back.

Mr. CORSER: The sum of £160,000 was the amount of revenue for the year 1920-21, and £50,000 was reinvested in the forests. What had become of the balance?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: It was put into consolidated revenue.

Mr. CORSER: Was it not far better that that money should be invested in their forests? It would be an advantage to the State, instead of trying to make a business out of the sale of the timber. In his district they had a huge forest at Good Night, and it cost an amount of money to keep that place clear of pear. The first year it cost £27, the second year £107, and now, he understood, they had two men permanently employed, and they were erecting fences to keep the pear out. All this was a cost to the State. The Good Night scrub was a good pine scrub. They had 429,000,000 acres of land in Queensland, of which only 4,000,000 acres were set aside for forest reserves or for reafforestation. The population of Queensland was about one person to the square mile. In other countries of the world, where they had 300 people to the square mile, they found a very much greater amount of timber land—private, municipal, and State lands—reserved for forestry.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Your supporters ask that the reserves be cut up for settlement.

Mr. CORSER: No. The reserves that the Government had been asked to cut up were reserves that were, in the main, more adapted for immediate settlement.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: In whose opinion?

Mr. CORSER: In the opinion of those who had some sense.

The TREASURER: You will agree that the forestry experts are the best judges.

Mr. CORSER: That might be. What about the railway experts? The Government surveyed a railway through the Good Night Scrub and then locked up the scrub.

Mr. FRY: The Forestry Act is out of date.

Mr. CORSER: The Government constructed the railway to Kallilwa and then locked up the reserve in the Good Night area. A matter that was worth mentioning to the Minister was the young timber estates to which, in time, they must look to be the large estates. When the Government constructed a new railway line they required sleepers, and to-day there was a system of cutting sleepers and bringing them to the railway sidings in thousands to be sawn. On most of the railway lines they found young, straight timber that would not split being brought in which would be beautiful timber in the future, and that class of

timber was being split down the centre and used for sleepers which really should be preserved to be big and useful timber in the very near future. That was a matter worthy of consideration by the Minister and the Forestry Branch—to see whether they were destroying too much of their young, straight timber and good iron-bark timber. This timber was being brought into the railway stations and being sawn into halves for sleepers. The best timber they could possibly have was near the railways. If the Government would give more consideration to the future of the timber industry than to their communistic platform, it would be far better for everybody.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Bacham*): The hon. member for Cooroora had voiced the opinion that only a few members of the Committee had given any attention to the question of forestry, and that outside the House those who knew anything about forestry were practically confined to the ordinary bushmen. As one of the ordinary bushmen, he rose for the purpose of congratulating the Secretary for Public Lands and the Director of Forests and his staff on having at this late hour in the history of the State made some attempt to stop the scandalous waste of timber assets and to place on a sound footing the reafforestation of the State. There were one or two hon. members, particularly the hon. member for Leichhardt and the Minister, who had paid more than passing attention to the question of reafforestation,

[10 p.m.] as shown by their speeches. The scandalous waste which had been carried on by past Governments, not only in Queensland, but in other States of the Commonwealth, made it necessary to take steps to prevent such waste in future and to do something for posterity. They were not like the Tory politician who said, "Damn posterity! What has posterity done for me?" They realised that, when it took from fifty to a hundred years to grow some of their valuable timbers, it was due to posterity that they should spend some of the money derived from forestry in planting the trees for posterity, because the timber of the State was the people's asset. When coal was taken out of the ground there was nothing left in its place, and the same applied to all their mineral wealth; but that did not apply to timber. Every man who took a stick of timber away from a forest should put a stick in its place. That was the law in European countries. As one speaker had said, compared with other countries, Australia was not a timber country, as some people imagined. There was very little timber in Australia compared with other countries. That was the reason why the Secretary for Public Lands was to be congratulated on attempting to preserve and make good use of some of the valuable timber that had been left by Tory Governments. The hon. member for Cooroora had pointed out that it was necessary to examine some of the State forest reserves with a view to throwing some of the land open for selection. It was a most difficult question. That was why he wanted to congratulate the Secretary for Public Lands upon having the courage to stand up and say that some of the land which politicians would like to have thrown open for settlement should be retained for the people. An important forester who came to this country to report on South Australian forestry pointed out that all Governments in Aus-

tralia had wasted timber, but he said that the Queensland Government was the worst of the lot, because of their scandalous waste of the softwood timbers on the coast of Queensland. That same gentleman, when inspecting the forest lands in Victoria, was shocked at the large number of hardwood trees destroyed in Gippsland, and he said that no doubt the Government of the day made a boast about the land being thrown open for selection. He found that the land was thrown open at 30s. an acre, and all that remained after ten or twelve years was the gaunt trunks of hardwood trees. On a conservative estimate, the land would have been worth from £100 to £150 an acre for the timber alone. The selector had put up a hut and cut the timber and then deserted the place. He simply rose to congratulate the Minister, and to ask members on both sides of the Chamber, not only to support the Minister, but also the Director of Forests, who was an enthusiast in his work. Realising as he did that the natural bent of the politician was to urge that land should be thrown open for selection, he asked hon. members on both sides to support the Minister and the Director of Forests in doing what they were doing to promote forestry in the State.

Question put and passed.

LAND COURT.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) moved—

"That £3,834 be granted for 'Land Court.'"

There was a slight increase of £829. There was an increase of £350 for travelling expenses of the court, and of £150 for postage, telegrams, and incidentals, and £150 for railway fares and freights, printing, stores, etc.

Question put and passed.

SURVEY OFFICE.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) moved—

"That £95,712 be granted for 'Survey Office.'"

There was a decrease of £3,013 on last year's vote.

Question put and passed.

MISCELLANEOUS (SUBDIVISION).

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*) moved—

"That £19,188 be granted for 'Miscellaneous Services (Subdivision).'"

There was a net decrease of £1,257 in the vote as compared with last year. There was an increase in connection with prickly-pear destruction of £1,000. They had to pay about £40 per ton to the Mines Department to make up the balance of the cost of the arsenic which was sold to the farmers to help them to destroy the pear.

MR. CORSER (*Burnett*): With regard to the item for prickly-pear, the Minister claimed that the amount was to compensate the Mines Department for the arsenic that they sold to the farmers. They knew that the arsenic mine was closed down, and that they were not likely to sell so much arsenic this year. The Home Secretary, when the Estimates of his department were under

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discussion, apologised for the smallness of the vote for prickly-pear, and said that the Lands Department was going to subsidise the local authorities.

The HOME SECRETARY: I did not. I said we were going to spend money on prickly-pear destruction.

Mr. CORSER: Did the hon. gentleman not lead them to understand that it was going to be the function of the Lands Department, and not of the Home Department?

The HOME SECRETARY: No; you know I did not.

Mr. CORSER: The State Arsenic Mine was not likely to produce so much arsenic since the department had been compelled to brand the arsenic and guarantee it to be 98 per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member is not going to discuss the State Arsenic Mine.

Mr. CORSER: As soon as they had to guarantee the arsenic they closed down. The department had big stocks of arsenic on hand, but it would not be so easy to brand it 98 per cent. He would like to know whether the department paid £40 a ton for the arsenic when it was only 14 per cent?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No. We were paying £13 then.

Mr. CORSER: Then the department was paying too much.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): The Secretary for Public Lands should endeavour to ascertain some means of destroying prickly-pear in addition to assisting the farmers to destroy pear by supplying arsenic. If the mine at Jibbenbar had been closed down, as the hon. member for Burnett said, the fact remained that the department was supplying farmers with arsenic at £10 a ton when they had to pay £80 a ton for it outside. If the Opposition were in power, instead of clearing land of prickly-pear, they would allow the country to be overrun with prickly-pear. It was all very well to talk about clearing pear: but, if they went into any of the local authority areas, they would find that in many instances the roads were overrun with pear.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERT: And so are the Government reserves.

Mr. GLEDSON: Very likely the Government reserves were full of pear, too. How were the Government going to clear the reserves of pear?

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: There are plenty of unemployed and tons of arsenic available. Put the unemployed on.

Mr. GLEDSON: Perhaps they would be able to put the hon. member for Oxley on to the work of clearing pear. When the National party were in power, they put the unemployed on to clearing pear at 3s. 9d. a day, and the workers got so full of prickles that, when they had finished, they had to come to Brisbane and go into the hospital. If hon. members of the Opposition had their way, they would have made no attempt to supply the farmers with poison to clear the pear. On the Downs many of the selectors who had taken up prickly-pear country had endeavoured to clear the pear, and they had found that the only successful method was to roll the pear and then plough it in, and put the land under cultivation. (Opposition laughter.) The selectors up there wanted some means of rolling that pear so that they would be able to plough it in. (Renewed

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laughter.) The other night some hon. member asked, "Why this hilarity?" and he asked why this hilarity when they were dealing with prickly-pear, which was one of the greatest pests they had in Queensland? (Continued Opposition laughter and interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. GLEDSON: The members of the Opposition could only laugh when they were dealing with the bread and butter of those men who had to make a living on the prickly-pear selections. (Opposition laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order, order!

Mr. GLEDSON: Some members of the Opposition were going to overcome the pest by rolling it, and they made a very nice roller; but, when they got the horses to shift it, they found they could not shift it with a team of bullocks. That was the way they had been attempting to mislead the farmers in connection with the business. He would ask the Secretary for Public Lands to take no notice of the Opposition in connection with their criticism of that vote. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would ask hon. members on my left to obey my call.

Mr. GLEDSON: The people of the country would be quite satisfied as to the class of men they had on the Opposition benches when it was known they could do nothing but laugh and giggle when a vote that affected the settlement of the country was under discussion.

Mr. SIZER: You will laugh yourself when you read your proof.

Mr. GLEDSON: He could take the hon. member to a farm to-day where they were ploughing prickly-pear in, and were doing it successfully. That was the only way in which they could successfully cope with the pest.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You must have seen that at Balgowan.

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes, he had seen it at Balgowan. A suggestion was made to him by a returned soldier that the Government should obtain some of the tanks that were used on the western front in order to cope with the prickly-pear pest. Those tanks would be able to go through the prickly-pear country and crush it down, and, after the pear was crushed in that manner, it would be possible to get on to the land and plough the pear in.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The new Minister for Prickly-pear! (Laughter.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. GLEDSON: It was far better to be doing something to help the Secretary for Public Lands in his efforts to cope with that pest than to be stuck in cement like the hon. member for Oxley. (Laughter.) In connection with the Public Estate Improvement Fund, he noticed there was a reduction of £2,000. They wanted to see the public estates improved and money spent on them to keep them up to the mark. He hoped the Minister would see that the £4,000 asked for the destruction of prickly-pear was spent to assist the farmers despite the adverse criticism of those who were supposed to represent the farmers.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): The hon. member for Ipswich might know something about coal, but he displayed his ignorance when he was dealing with prickly-pear. The hon.

member talked about the manufacture of arsenic as being the only thing to destroy the pear, and then he said that the only way to destroy it was to plough it in. Notwithstanding the fact that arsenic was sold by the Government for £10 per ton, they could never clear the prickly-pear with it. In 1915, 60.95 per cent. of the prickly-pear selectors fulfilled the conditions, but last year only 39 per cent. were fulfilling the conditions, and 52 per cent. had completely failed to fulfil the conditions, while 3.8 per cent. were doubtful. That showed that less selectors were fulfilling the conditions to-day. It was not the fault of the legislation that the pear conditions were not being fulfilled. As he had said on a former occasion, even if water would destroy the pear and they sprayed water on it, it would not pay to get the water to do it. They would have to nationalise the prickly-pear question. At the present time the prickly-pear selectors were forfeiting their selections and taking up the land again under occupation license. The Secretary for Public Lands was dealing sympathetically with the prickly-pear selectors, as he was allowing them to take up the land under occupation license so as to save their improvements. Members opposite told the Minister to be strict and insist on the conditions being fulfilled, but the Minister was administering the Act reasonably and fairly in the interests of the selectors. The prickly-pear question should be a national undertaking, and they should create buffer areas and prevent it from spreading further. The time might come when science would come to their aid and produce something which would destroy the pear. The Government were advancing £2,000 per year for this, but it would be better if they advanced £10,000 per year for the purpose. They might be able to introduce some disease which would work while they were sleeping, and destroy the pear. It would cost £20,000,000 to clear all the pear in Queensland, and perhaps up to £50,000,000. He would willingly vote to create three States in Queensland for the purpose of saving the rest of Queensland from the pear menace. Southern Queensland was already too far gone under pear, but they could save the centre and North by creating new States, and they would then introduce new land laws which would keep the pear from spreading northward. There were 30,000,000 acres infested in Queensland, and it was time that the Government started to create buffer areas. They wasted a lot of time debating unimportant matters, and it was time they tackled the question of preventing the spread of pear.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): He could not allow the vote to go through without discussing such an important question as the destruction of prickly-pear. The question would have to be taken in hand by the Government to prevent further areas becoming infested. They saw from the report of the Lands Department that the pear was spreading up the Dawson Valley. It was necessary to devise some means to prevent the pear from spreading further.

At 10.30 p.m.,

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

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

WANT OF CONFIDENCE MOTION.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I rise to move—

“That the Government does not possess the confidence of this House or of the electors of Queensland.”

(Loud and continuous Government laughter.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: When matters of grave importance are brought before this Chamber the clown element which sits on the back seat opposite always seems to assert itself. It is nearly time that good order was practised in this House; and I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to see that these gentlemen—honourable by Act of Parliament—behave themselves. This is simply “direct action,” taken with a view to intimidating members on this side of the House.

In moving this motion, I ask hon. gentlemen in this Chamber, on both sides, to deal with the matter dispassionately.

Mr. BRENNAN: How can they?

Mr. VOWLES: I was very astonished yesterday to see the attitude the Premier himself adopted, the levity with which the motion was received, and the cat-calls that came from a certain quarter. We have heard a lot to-night about a “buffer area.” There is one bench over there that is becoming a “buffoon area,” and the sooner hon. gentlemen realise it the better. The matters with which we are dealing to-night are serious matters. The Government are on their trial. The people of Queensland are watching our efforts to try and instil common sense into members who sit opposite. I ask them to deal with the matters we propose to discuss to-night, not from a party point of view, not from a personal or political point of view, but in a general way as citizens of Queensland, and to realise that the party who are in power to-night do not represent a majority of the people of Queensland. The members who sit on this side of the Chamber happen to number one less, nevertheless they represent a majority of the people in the country; and we have always understood that in a democracy the voice of the majority should count.

The TREASURER: How do you make out that you represent a majority?

Mr. VOWLES: On this side of the House we represent about 20,000 electors more than hon. gentlemen on the other side. I propose to deal with this matter under certain headings.

The first charge I make against this Government is—

“That the Government has forfeited the confidence of this House and of the electors of Queensland by reason of its policy of State enterprises, which is occasioning such disastrous loss to the State and a curtailment of that individual or private enterprise which is so essential in the development of Queensland.”

Mr. BRENNAN: You told us that about two months ago.

Mr. VOWLES: I think it must be realised that almost every venture that this Government have embarked upon has been a huge failure and has been the means of losing vast sums of money, not the property of the Government but the property of the people, for whom they are trustees; and their policy of State enterprises should cease. If you look to what has occurred in connection with

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cun railways, which is one of the great enterprises, since the advent of this Government, you will find we have an accumulated deficit of £6,660,000. The Government did not heed the warnings which have been given in the past by the Auditor-General and the Commissioner for Railways, and, as a result, this deficit is yearly becoming bigger; and for the year under review it has reached its highest amount—in the neighbourhood of £1,750,000.

If you analyse the State stations you will find they are in a deplorable condition. I propose to deal with them at greater length at a later period of my speech. Although we are finishing a hurry-up session we have not had at our disposal up to the present the necessary material—the reports of the Auditor-General and of the Commissioner for Trade—in connection with State enterprises, in order that we may debate the position in this House. We know that the Auditor-General, in his report dealing with the previous financial year, made some very caustic criticisms about the way in which certain results had been obtained in connection with State stations. He charged the Government with having falsified their books, with having placed an inflated value on stocks, deliberately, to bring about the desired result.

The PREMIER: He made no such charge.

Mr. VOWLES: The Auditor-General told us distinctly that the Government inflated the values of their stock to the extent of £40,000.

The PREMIER: What did the Auditor-General say about you?

Mr. VOWLES: The Auditor-General said that about the Government. I told the hon. gentleman the other night what I thought about the Auditor-General's criticism of me, and about the present which the hon. gentleman made to him—which I considered was indecent, considering the relationship that exists between the Auditor-General and the Government. But I am dealing to-night with this statement in connection with these State enterprises. He told us distinctly there should have been a loss of £40,000, because they credited themselves with that sum, and that they had inflated the value of the stock upon their stations. In ordinary business it must be realised that every pastoralist has had to reduce the value of his stock by from 40 per cent. to 50 per cent. We are very anxious to know on what basis the Government have valued their assets during the last financial year, what depreciation they have charged themselves, and what is the number of stock they are supposed to have. I propose to show that one of their inspectors in the North has reported to the Government that in the Gulf area they are 50,000 head of stock short. That is on record in their department, and, when I asked for a Commission to inquire into that and other matters recently, I was refused it.

I think the history of the State butchers' shops is pretty well known by the public to-day. They show a credit balance on paper, but that credit balance has been arrived at by manipulating stock values and by bringing stock from the State stations into the State butchers' shops at a reduced value. We have proved that conclusively as far as the Charleville shop is concerned. We showed there that the stock was charged in the books of the State butcher's shop at £9 10s., and they were the very stock for which

they had been offered £14 per head on Dillalah, which is not far from Charleville. In other words, they were debiting the State stations with the difference between £9 10s. and £14, and accepting the benefit of it in their butcher shop transactions, in order to bolster up a rotten business.

It is known that the fish shops have been a tremendous drag upon the department, and that the business is practically to be closed up.

The Chillagoe smelters, as disclosed in the Auditor-General's report, showed a loss last year of £48,000. Every department that they run as a State enterprise, with the exception of the Insurance Office, has been a ghastly failure, and yet, in the face of this experience, they are perpetuating these mistakes and permitting the public funds thus to be squandered. Every State station and other enterprise which comes into competition with the legitimate enterprise of private individuals is a mistake and an excess of the governmental powers of a State. A Government is intended to govern and not to trade—(Opposition members: Hear, hear!)—and, if it goes outside those functions and by trading closes down the businesses of private individuals, and if it also runs those trading concerns at a loss, it is doing a double harm to the community.

I propose to pass from that to the second head—

“The imposition of burdensome taxation to balance excessive expenditure, thereby crippling trade and enterprise, and the general irresponsibility which has surrounded its financial administration.”

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: There is no need for me to go into detail again on their financial administration. We discussed it on a previous motion and on the Financial Statement, but it is just as well again to record the fact that in 1914-15, we received by way of direct taxation £850,000, and through their excessive taxation that amount last year was raised to £3,632,642. In 1914-15, the Tory Government, as they call it, received by way of revenue £7,202,000, which was a record revenue up to that time, and concluded the year with a surplus, after a series of surpluses. The revenue received last financial year was £12,601,000 in round numbers, or a difference of £5,358,000. Last year the expenditure from all sources, revenue, loan, and trust funds, was £21,500,000, and yet we have record unemployment and misery in the State of Queensland. Last year, too, we received revenue in excess of the estimate of the Treasurer to the extent of £704,000, and expended out of it £493,704. After allowing for certain credits in respect of previous deficits, we finished the year with an alleged credit of roughly £10,000, which has been dissipated, because we claim that many items have not been charged to the year's transactions which should have been so charged but which were held over till the next month.

There is another matter which has been discussed on every occasion when we have had occasion to criticise the Government, and it may be summed up as—

“The damage it has occasioned the fair name of Queensland by its repudiatory legislation.”

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[Mr. Vowles.]

Mr. VOWLES: We have dealt with the effect of the Land Acts Amendment Act of 1920 on pastoralists and grazing farmers, with the harm done to Queensland by interference with rights under the Brisbane Tramways Act, and we have also shown what has happened in respect of a contract between the Government and the judges of Queensland.

Mr. KIRWAN: Did you see what the "Producers' Review" said about that?

Mr. VOWLES: I did not, and I do not care what it said. I never read that paper, and it is not representative of the party I have the honour to lead. We are not responsible for anything which appears in that paper, and we disown it.

The next charge I make is—

"The damage the Government have occasioned to the fair name of Queensland by their repudiatory legislation."

Only last night another phase of repudiation cropped up in respect to the attitude of the Government towards some of our public servants. We have suddenly discovered that gentlemen who have been practically all their lives in the service of the State, and who were induced to come under the superannuation scheme and pay certain premiums on a basis which was put before them by an actuary, Mr. Rendle, a Government servant, have been misled, to say the very least of it. They were distinctly told that they were going to be employed till they were seventy years of age, and would then receive certain benefits. Otherwise they would have made certain provision by taking out other units for their protection. Now they have suddenly discovered that they are to be retired at sixty-five and have been told that they will have to continue to pay their contributions till they are seventy or compound at a big loss to themselves. We consider that that is repudiation of a very bad kind, and a matter which the public of Queensland should realise, so that, when they come to give a decision, they may be in a position to judge the Government's action.

Another matter of complaint has cropped up during the last week. I refer to—

"The extremism which is rapidly demonstrating itself in the utterances of the rulers of the Labour party, both inside and outside the House."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: We have not yet had an opportunity in this House of discussing that communism which is rampart, and to which hon. members on the other side are going to subscribe. Only a week ago a conference was held in Brisbane of the Australian Labour party to confirm the recommendations of the congress which sat in Melbourne in June, 1921. The old established platform of the Labour party, on which gentlemen opposite came into this House, has been materially altered. We are told that their main objective is "The socialisation of industry, production, distribution, and exchange." Are these gentlemen not acting under false pretences if they are going to carry out the dictates of this conference, and advocate those principles? The Premier has given his views very publicly on the matter. It was proposed—

"For the purpose of achieving their objective, constitutional methods of industrial and parliamentary action shall be employed."

The Premier, Mr. Theodore, took exception to it, and said that they might just as well change the name of the party and call it the Communistic party.

The PREMIER: If they carried what they were advocating.

Mr. VOWLES: The Premier and the Home Secretary were both present. We are all agreed that they did their best to stop this principle being imposed upon the people of Australia. An hon. member who sits in the back bench and supports the Government was just as keen that it should be made the objective, and the majority carried it.

We are told that there is only one objective and one Labour party in Australia—that the majority rules even in the caucus room downstairs. The matter having been decided, we know in what position hon. members opposite stand. They must carry out the behests or the injunctions of this conference, and they must not only carry it out, but they must proclaim it from the housetop and endeavour to carry it into effect. The Premier said that it would bring about a split in the Labour movement if it was carried. He said that it must destroy the Labour ideal and the Labour movement. The Home Secretary said—

"Ethically, communism has much to recommend it, but I am opposed to it because I think it is inoperative."

Another plank in the platform was carried to which I want to refer particularly—

"That all parliamentary representatives and all trade union officials be required to function as active propagandists of the objective and methods of the movement."

That is the position in which the hon. members opposite find themselves to-night. I ask—Are they here under false pretences to-night? Are they here carrying out the platform that they put before the people at the last general election? They have changed suddenly from the advocacy of nationalism, and they are now supporting communism and sovietism. There is a duty cast upon the present Government, and that is to go back to the people of Queensland and get a further mandate from them if they can. They have no right to sit here, because, after those resolutions have been adopted, they are here under false pretences.

The PREMIER: Let me ask you this question—

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman will have an opportunity of replying later on. I will conduct my speech in my own way. I give the hon. gentleman this amount of credit—that he did his very best to resist the proposal of the conference, the same as we on this side would have done if we had been in that position and things were done that we did not like. Because the majority in the House rules, we and the general public have to submit to the legislation of the Government and pay taxation, just as hon. members opposite have to carry out the resolutions that were passed at that conference.

The PREMIER: Did you go back on your party when you deserted the Nationalists and joined the Country party?

Mr. VOWLES: I have never deserted any party. Those tactics are characteristic of the

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Premier. Like a rat, when he gets into a corner, he bites or shows his teeth. His argument, as usual, is one of common abuse. I ask him to stand up to his responsibilities and go to the people and say, "We have changed our ideas; they have been thrust upon us, and we want to ask if they are acceptable to you"; and, if he gets a mandate, well and good. No one knows better than the hon. gentleman that these resolutions are causing disruption in his ranks. Amongst hon. members opposite there are moderates and extremists. The representative in the Upper House supported the extreme element, which apparently comes from Maryborough. The moderates turn out to be the Premier and the Home Secretary; but if you are going to call them moderates, I do not know how we are going to describe the others.

The next charge against the Government is—

"The unemployment which is rampant in our midst, and the reasons which have occasioned it."

That is the result of excessive taxation and bad administration. It is the result of the Government embarking upon State enterprises and competing with private individuals. It is the result of the wholehearted apathy towards the people they claim to represent here. We have had a splendid example of that in the past, and we have had an illustration of it in this House when I moved the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing the position of unemployment, and the Premier would not allow the discussion to take place. He closed down on it, and there can be only one reason. If a man in his position is not prepared to hear the truth and wants to hide it, he must be ashamed of it.

Another charge against the Government is—

"Their failure to inaugurate a system of land settlement which is essential for the development and welfare of such a sparsely populated State as Queensland."

We have been discussing land matters to-night. I did not speak on them. Hon. members on this side of the House have seen that the Government have no policy so far as prickly-pear destruction is concerned; they have no settled policy in respect of immigration. So far as their land policy is concerned, they have the most unattractive legislation and conditions of tenure.

They cannot expect people to come here. Taxation is higher here, the per capita conditions are worse, and there is no inducement; and, unless hon. members embark on some attractive land policy, Queensland will not come into her own. The other States will receive all the benefit of the immigration and the expansion that will follow, and we shall be left derelict.

Then there is a matter affecting the primary producers, and that is the feud going on between, presumably, the Secretary for Agriculture and one of the Federal departments.

It is a trial of vested interests between, apparently, the officers in one department here and another department in the South, to see which is going to survive. While this is going on, important industries here are being neglected and victimised. I am speaking in respect of the cheese and butter industries and export overseas.

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Mr. KIRWAN: There is one thing you cannot grade, and that is the Opposition.

Mr. VOWLES: That is one thing you can grade. They are all of one grade.

Mr. CORSER: They are all A grade. (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: I next charge the Government with—

"Apathy in passively acquiescing in the enormous loss which is being sustained by the dairy producers of Queensland owing to the delays and damage done through the dual grading which has been continuing for some time."

The members of the Opposition have been endeavouring, individually and collectively, to bring about a solution of this trouble. The Minister and the officials have been interviewed to see that stocks of cheese and butter are not left here. We do not want the position to arise that existed before.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Are you trying to organise another "hold up"?

Mr. VOWLES: No. I am trying to clear that matter up, and I ask the hon. gentleman to let common sense prevail.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Who is responsible?

Mr. VOWLES: This matter was brought up in the Federal House, and I have here a report of what took place there—

"DAIRY PRODUCE.

"EXPORT OF CHEESE.

"*The Grading Question.*

"Melbourne, 7th October,

"In the House of Representatives to-day the Minister for Customs told Mr. Corser (N.) that it was not a fact that every satisfaction existed for many years while Queensland undertook the grading of cheese. Under the Dairy Produce Act the work of grading was done by State officials for the Commonwealth, but complaints were received from merchants in England regarding the unsatisfactory condition of Queensland cheese. Cheese for export in Queensland was now graded entirely by Commonwealth officers under the guidance of a cheese expert. State legislation in Queensland required cheese to be graded, but until the cheese was actually submitted for export the Commonwealth could not interfere. Through State officers' interference lately with regard to cheese intended for export, large quantities of cheese had been held up, but, to protect exporters from inconvenience and hardship in consequence of that hold-up, the Commonwealth delivered the cheese to be exported, bearing grade marks inconsistent with the Commonwealth grade marks. In order to preserve uniformity in cheese grading throughout the Commonwealth, it was necessary that Commonwealth grading should continue as at present."

In spite of the fact that it is quite sufficient to have the Commonwealth grading for the export of surplus cheese by one tester, you will find that sometimes there have been as many incisions as eight in one cheese, with the result that the cheese is practically useless, because it becomes mildewed, and not only is the value of the product depreciated

but it goes home and gives a false impression as to what the real value of our commodity is.

There is another matter I wish to refer to—the closing of the session after a short period of ten weeks, when matters of vital interest to the State require discussion and decision. We dealt, to some extent, with that matter last night, when a certain motion was moved in the House.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: If you do not agree with the grading, is your party in favour of Commonwealth or State grading?

Mr. VOWLES: We believe in one grading.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Which one?

Mr. VOWLES: We want one, and one only; we do not want this dual control.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: The farmers say they want the State grading. Tell us what you want!

Mr. VOWLES: This is a matter where we want one grader—that is all. I was dealing last with a proposal to close the session, so that the Premier might go to Melbourne. We claim that, if the Premier wants to go away, we should do what is being done in the other States. We are sent here to do the business of the country. The passing of Bills through all their stages in one day may be decided upon by the House, but we claim that it is unconstitutional, because it is depriving us of the opportunity of giving the mature consideration which is necessary for all the important matters which will come before the Chamber. If we are deprived of that opportunity for discussion, the rights of the people we represent are being infringed. If we were within a few days of Christmas, and it was necessary to work overtime as we are doing now—we are working twelve hours a day—in order to get to our homes for the festive season, we would have no objection, provided legislation had been dealt with. But this is one of the shortest sessions on record. There is a sudden desire on the part of the Government to get into recess. The Government have a majority of one, and are tottering. Certain things have happened recently in the Labour Conference which make them feel insecure, and they want to “get out and get under,” so that they will be safe in their places, and hon. members who sit behind them will not have the opportunity of coming over here and breaking up the Government.

Going back to the first charge I made against the Government, on 11th October I asked the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises—

“1. Is he aware—

(a) That the sum of £1,950 was paid to a contractor named McDonald for work done at Vanrook Station, which, according to a reliable estimate, could have been performed for half the money; also, that no proper contract in writing was signed by the parties, and, further, that the sum of £500 was paid to such contractor before any work was performed on the station, and that this sum was held by such contractor over twelve months before completing his contract?”

I got the reply—

“1 to 4. I am aware that the statements contained in these questions are false, malicious, and ridiculous.”

I go so far as to say that the reply of the Minister is false, malicious, and ridiculous.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Muckey*): I rise to a point of order. The leader of the Opposition has accused me of making a false reply to a question.

Mr. CORSER: They are your own words.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member for Dalby is not in order in accusing the Minister of having given a false answer to a question.

Mr. VOWLES: I withdraw the words; but, at the same time, the Minister insults me in answer to a question I ask, and I am not to use his own words.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I spoke of the information on which the question was based.

Mr. VOWLES: I ask for a Royal Commission to inquire into this. (Government laughter.) I have evidence to prove every one of these items. I asked a second question—

“2. Is he aware that political interference by a member of the Assembly enforced the reinstatement of a manager to a management of another property after such manager had proved wasteful in his management, whilst the inspector who detected such waste and saved the State hundreds of pounds has been removed and disgraced?”

I got no reply to that at all.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Nothing of the kind ever occurred.

Mr. VOWLES: I have a copy of the wire that the hon. member for Burke sent to Mr. Austin, where he said that “direct action” would be resorted to. We have a private member of the Government able to override an inspector.

Mr. RIORDAN: Read the wire.

Mr. VOWLES: I have the wire here, and I will read it. I also asked the Minister if he was aware—

“(b) That telephone lines were being built on State stations at 50 per cent. above local costs for similar work?”

I am told that that is false, malicious, and ridiculous.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: So it is.

Mr. VOWLES: I have the official documents to prove that, too.

The SPEAKER: The Minister said that his statement related to the information referred to in the question, and that he did not apply those words to the hon. member personally.

Mr. VOWLES: I will give some information about the way the State stations are carried on, which will be a revelation. The public will be surprised when I read out some of the documents which I hold here.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I know all the documents you have. You had dealings with a public servant—a disgraced man, who has violated his oath of office. That is the depth to which you have sunk.

Mr. VOWLES: I will give, first of all, a letter dated 5th January from the Minister himself to Mr. Gillies, in which he says—

“I am in receipt of a letter addressed to you by Mr. J. R. Gallagher, containing questions and answers thereto relative to the recent inquiry on the management of Vanrook Station. These things

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furnish ample evidence of the general unsatisfactory position with regard to the whole business."

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I stand to that to-day.

Mr. VOWLES: I asked the Minister also—

"Is it a fact that fencing was being repaired or re-erected at £55 per mile?"

I used the words "80 per cent. above cost," which was £55 per mile, and, after this inspector got on the job, it was done for £25 per mile.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Nothing of the kind.

Mr. VOWLES: It is being done to-day for that price. I also asked—

"If carriers were being paid 33 per cent. above local rates in a first-class season?"

I am told that this is based on "false, malicious, and ridiculous evidence." The fact remains that this inspector reduced the price by 33 per cent., and the work is being done for that price to-day. Further, I asked—

"Whether carriage cheques were paid to a fictitious person and the bookkeeper reported to be the recipient?"

It is admitted, I understand, in the head office that cheques have been drawn in the name of fictitious persons.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: That is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: This charge was made twelve months ago to the department. It went this far: That, when the inspector insisted on a certain man being sacked, he was sacked, but he was afterwards reinstated under the influence of a member of this House.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Quite untrue!

Mr. VOWLES: An informal inquiry was held, in which the complainant was not allowed to call his witnesses, where evidence was not taken on oath, where no depositions were taken, and where the only witness who was brought forward by the complainant was intimidated by the gentleman who was holding the inquiry. I will bring a letter from the man Stone, in which he will tell you that Barr, who was appointed as a court to inquire into certain charges against the manager of the station, intimidated the man during the lunch hour.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Absolute rot!

Mr. VOWLES: I have Stone's letter to the effect that during lunch time he was told not to give evidence in Gallagher's favour, because, if he did, he would drop him like a hot potato afterwards, and he would suffer accordingly. I have information that men who were employed on State stations were miles away training a racehorse belonging to the manager of the station. I have evidence where men who were receiving money for driving cattle on contract were receiving wages at the same time from the station. I have evidence to show that contractors who were working on the run had a license to kill station cattle; and, further than that, that one man attempted to dispose of one of the hides in a certain town. In the records I have here there are enough charges for any Royal Commission to take a month over. I have got the absolute documents in these matters. I am not going to allow the Go-

vernment to "bulldoze" me; I am not going to allow them to suppress evidence like they did on a previous occasion, and bring forward false evidence. I have the documents here, and I ask for an inquiry in public interests, and I am refused.

Mr. WEIR: You will get it all here.

Mr. VOWLES: I know this matter has been before caucus, and the men on whose behalf I am speaking now are sitting behind the Government, and I am looking directly at one of them now. (Interruption.)

Mr. HARTLEY: You have not proved that statement.

Mr. VOWLES: He has not only one advocate but he has a host of them in caucus; but he has not a majority. That is his misfortune. He even has his solicitor in the caucus. I was asked about this wire of the hon. member for Burke.

Mr. RIORDAN: Read it!

Mr. VOWLES: This is from Mr. Riordan to Mr. Austin, Commissioner of State Enterprises—

"In the interests of State withhold appointment of general manager. Inspector took direct action against Tonner. Withhold action against him until I arrive in Brisbane."

As a result of that wire, the man who had been discharged by the Commissioner of State Enterprises—

Mr. RIORDAN: He was not discharged.

Mr. VOWLES: He was dispensed with, then, or "deflated." His services were "deflated."

Mr. RIORDAN: He was working on the station. He had been given notice, but he was still working there.

Mr. VOWLES: What cause would there be for the hon. member to ask for a suspension of action if the manager was still working? I have a copy of the letter from Mr. Austin—I do not want to bring Mr. Austin into it any more than I can help—I have his letter here; and he admits the man was suspended, and that he appointed a man named Barr as a court of inquiry to go into the matter. We have been charged with making all sorts of wild statements in this House, and I come before the House to-night armed with all the documents. People are prepared to substantiate everything I have said here; and I ask for an inquiry, and the Government are not game to grant it. I will give some of the reports on their cattle stations, and I will show where one station manager returned as having had 280 head of large stock on his property. He sent that report to the head office in Brisbane, and he got a reply from Brisbane, and was told that he did not have 280 head of stock, but that he had 1,060 head. That man had to alter his return accordingly, and I have that document here. Does that not warrant an inquiry? Is that correct? Here is what this inspector says—

"By their own figures as supplied from head office for quarter ending 31st December, 1919, I had 1,442 on my books. Out of that number, I put 1,063 on the road in 1920. Of course, there are deaths to come off that 1,442, which they never allowed in June, 1920. I sent in my quarterly return, showing about 240 head of cattle on the place. They took no notice of it, but early in September,

[Mr. Vowles.]

1920, they sent me an amended stock-sheet from head office (copy enclosed); then I got 53 heifers from Merluna, and, with what I landed since June, 1919, I show 1,050 head of cattle on the place; 280 head would be much nearer to it."

(Opposition laughter.) That is a sample of the way the business was carried on. It shows that the Government did not allow any percentage for deaths on 30th June last. They estimated the number of stock, and, if you take the difference at 5 per cent., you will see that it amounts to a very large sum of money. The Government are supposed to be running 500,000 head of stock, estimated to be worth £4 per head; but, when you find the real position of the State stations as at 30th June last, which are supposed to show a profit, and if you go a little further, you will find that that result was obtained by the official figures in the head office, Brisbane. But we know definitely that there is one instance of where they said that they had 1,050 head when there were only 280 head there; you can probably come to the same conclusion as the inspector did when he wrote down to the Minister in Charge of State Enterprises and told him that, in his opinion, there were 50,000 head short.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Gallagher never wrote to me in his life.

MR. VOWLES: He wrote to the hon. gentleman sitting on your left, who was then in charge of the department. Perhaps I will remove all misunderstanding by reading the letter.

MR. CORSLER: Hear hear! Shove it into them!

MR. VOWLES: This letter is addressed to the Hon. W. N. Gillies, and is dated 29th March, 1921—only a few months ago. It reads as follows:—

"Brisbane, 29th March, 1921.

"The Hon. W. N. Gillies, M.L.A.,
Brisbane.

"Sir,—I desire to briefly place a few facts before you relative to the unjust treatment meted out to me by the State Stations Department. I was employed as State stations inspector on the 17th May, having vacated a position in your department to assume that office. I found many of the stations in a shocking condition. For instance, when I inspected Macaroni, the books showed 1,272 aged bullocks, and there was not a bullock older than a No. 8 on the run. The manager explained that the bullocks had been taken off the run, but not marked off the books. I am confident there is a deficiency of 50,000 cattle on all stations, and this estimate is a very moderate one. On Wando Vale the brandings in 1917 were 4,111; in 1920 the brandings were 1,653. No breeders were sold, and, in consequence, the brandings should have been materially maintained in spite of drought.

"I enclose photos of two and three year old cleanskins, which show the utter neglect of administration."

That letter was written by an official as a matter of duty to the Minister in charge of his department in March last. He says, further—

"The climax of opposition to my energy to protect the Government's interests transpired when I recommended the dismissal of a man named Tonner

from Vanrook. The Commissioner acted on my recommendation, but later, on receiving a wire from Mr. Riordan, M.L.A., granted an inquiry. Mr. Riordan's wire, which I have seen, ran as follows:—

In the interests of the State withhold appointment of general manager Inspector took direct action against Tonner; withhold action against him until I arrive in Brisbane."

There was a verbal agreement made that a man named McDonald was to receive £1,590 for labour only on a job. The inspector estimated the value of this labour at £950. This has been confirmed by a practical man who has inspected the specification for this work. He received £500, and he held the £500 for twelve months before he did a stroke of work. Under that verbal arrangement this man received £1,590. Again, when a job was finished they fixed exorbitant prices.

Here is another instance of fixing the price after the job was finished. It was not a contract. It was a sort of arrangement they made, by which they sought to see how much they would get out of the job.

THE PREMIER: Are you forgetting that you are moving a want-of-confidence motion?

MR. VOWLES: I am bringing forward what I consider to be a public scandal, and I am bringing it forward in a constitutional way. I am asking the Government to hold an inquiry into these charges.

THE PREMIER: You have already had one inquiry into State stations. (Government laughter.)

MR. VOWLES: I want another one.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

MR. VOWLES: I might also get some information in respect to that other Royal Commission. The hon. gentleman may get further information about that other Royal Commission one of these days. I want a Royal Commission to inquire into the matters I am speaking about to-night. I have no regrets about Wando Vale at all.

THE SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Then you have no shame.

MR. VOWLES: It is not a matter of finding the smoke. We have shown the flames, and we want an inquiry into the fire. I do not want to labour the matter any more than is necessary. Here is one case. I have ample evidence to prove that the man who was receiving bounteous contracts or arrangements from the station manager was also the donor of presents to the manager. We can only read between the lines. We find the contractor telling the manager that he can trust him, but, when you find the next minute that he has a present placed in his hands, then you find things are not as they should be. I might give the report in connection with one of the stations. When hon. members read this report they will realise that it is not a matter to be laughed at. It is dated 14th October, 1920. The inspector in his report to head office says—

"Cooktown, 4th October, 1920.

"REPORT ON MERLUNA STATE STATION.

"Management,—

"It is almost impossible for me to convey in words the deplorable conditions existing on Merluna Station. The out-

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side portions of the run have not been mustered for the past four years, with the result that the cattle have all gone wild, and on account of the scrubby nature of the country it will take two years' hard going to brand the run up, and, in fact, the only way the cattle can be mustered is by using coachers and by moonlighting. The late manager, —, made no effort to keep the run branded up, and, as a matter of fact, from knowledge that I gained, he seldom left the homestead and did not trouble to keep the men working. To give some idea of the state of affairs existing, I rounded up several mobs of cattle, and in many cases there was not a branded beast amongst them; in other mobs the majority were cleanskins."

I will show later that there is another charge in respect to different stations. Although there are a big lot of breeders there, there are no calves at all. The excuses that were given for that were that they were due to floods and another that they were due to droughts. On the adjoining property there was evidence of an abundance of calves. When calves are found on the adjoining property, there should be a fair percentage on the State station too. Then, the report continues—

"There are also about 1,200 old scrub bullocks that should have been shifted long ago. I am having them mustered, and the first draft of 500 will leave at the beginning of the thunderstorms; 200 of these bullocks on arrival at Brooklyn will be fit to kill for the Cairns shop. It is pointed out that Merluna cattle are scattered from the east to the west coast of the peninsula for a distance of 150 miles, so it will give some idea of the up-hill battle the new manager has to contend with. However, I am satisfied that — will soon change the situation; for he is a very capable man, and has already erected substantial yards and started moonlighting. The head stockman, employed at the station was nothing more than a cattle-killer. In one instance five head were left by him in Merluna yard till they perished from want of water. He also shot several bullocks that broke away from the mob. After seeing for myself the cattle dead in the yard, I immediately dismissed him. There is no doubt that the bad state of affairs, as I found them on my arrival at Merluna, would have necessitated my dismissing Mackay had his resignation not already been handed in."

Further on he tells us that an adjoining owner, whose land has been resumed and attached to the holding, still defies the station manager and will not remove his cattle from the property of the State station. We find in another portion, where the cleanskins are, that men are going about the run carrying branding irons. What does that suggest? Is it any wonder that they are 50,000 head of cattle short; that the State stations are a ghastly failure; and that the Government made a guess at the numbers on hand at 30th June last, and were not in a position to allow any percentage for calves?

There are many other matters throughout the report to which I could refer. [11.30 p.m.] I could show that in June, 1920, a complaint was made by the inspector to Mr. McGugan. Mr. McGugan

[*Mr. Vowles.*

confirms all that has been stated by the inspector. In his report the inspector said that free beef was being delivered to contractors. The report states—

"I questioned Armstrong about this matter, and he informed me that — instructed him to supply and deliver meat free of cost to the contractors. If this is correct, the manager is evidently running the State stations as a benevolent institution instead of on strict business lines."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member has exhausted the time allowed him under Standing Order No. 107.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I beg to move—That the leader of the Opposition be granted an extension of time to enable him to complete his speech.

Question—Extension of time to leader of Opposition (*Mr. Corser's motion*)—put; and the House divided—

AYES, 34.

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	" Vowles
" Green	" Walker
" Jones	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Sizer.

NOES, 35.

Mr. Barber	Mr. Kirwan
" Brennan	" Land
" Bulcock	" Lavenue
" Conroy	" McCormack
" Cooper, P. A.	" Mullan
" Cooper, W.	" Payne
" Coyne	" Pease
" Dash	" Pollock
" Dunstan	" Pjordan
" Ferriicks	" Ryan
" Fihelly	" Smith
" Foley	" Stopford
" Forde	" Theodore
" Gilbey	" Weir
" Gillies	" Wellington
" Gledson	" Wilson
" Hartley	" Winstanley
" Huxham	

Tellers: Mr. Foley and Mr. Forde.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Peterson. No—Mr. Collins.

Resolved in the negative.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): A very great compliment had been paid to the leader of the Opposition by the refusal of the Premier and the members on the Government side of the House to give him what he had a right to expect and what should be granted to him by any Government, especially a Government who calls itself a Labour Government—a democratic Government—a Government which believes in freedom of speech. It is difficult to understand where democracy and love of freedom come in in connection with members on the Government side of the House, when they apply the "gag" in such a brutal manner. It is quite evident—from the splendid address which we have heard from the leader of the Opposition, and

the points which he brought forward in connection with State station management throughout Queensland—that, if ever there was a necessity for the appointment of a Royal Commission to find out how things are being conducted in this State, the hon. gentleman has shown the necessity to-night. If the Government have any concern for their reputation and for the fair name of Queensland, they will at once take steps to find out whether those charges are right or wrong. If they are right, the sooner the people know the better; and if they are false so much the better for the Government, and so much the worse for this side of the House. We have nothing to be afraid of in connection with the disclosures; but it is quite evident from their attitude that the Government do not wish for an inquiry.

On this motion I propose to confine myself mainly to the point raised in the first charge of the leader of the Opposition—the disastrous losses occasioned by the Government's State enterprises.

Mr. PEASE: Tell us about the State Insurance Office, and the sawmills and the refreshment rooms, which show a profit!

Mr. TAYLOR: I will give you enough about State enterprises before I have done.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: I quite expect that the others who will follow me and deal with the other points will be "gagged" in a little while—in fact, I may have the "gag" put on me before I get very far. If the Government want to stifle free discussion, let them go ahead and put on the "gag" now. Let them put it on as much and as soon as they like. (Government laughter.) They will not have many more opportunities to "gag" the Opposition in this House—nobody knows better than the Premier, who can read the signs of the times as well as any man in this Chamber, that they are in office for the last time in the history of the State of Queensland for many years to come.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. PEASE: God help Queensland!

Mr. TAYLOR: It is quite evident that hon. members opposite cannot help Queensland, and it requires the Almighty to come along and lift Queensland out of her troubles. I say "Amen" to that prayer. I intend to quote some figures to show the people just exactly where their money is being wasted on State enterprises. Out of Trust Funds on the 30th June, 1920, there has been spent a sum of £204,191, and on the 30th June of this year £589,465—a loss of £385,274 for the year. The expenditure was £1,474,120; so that the loss was 26 per cent. If there are any moneys which should be sacred in respect of expenditure, I take it that they are Trust Funds, deposited in the Savings Bank, and lent to the Government by the people for the development of the State. Have they been used in legitimate development, or have they been wasted in wild-cat schemes? I propose to show that they have been simply applied to wild-cat enterprises, and that tens of thousands of pounds have been lost to the State.

I shall start with the trawler. The present Premier was responsible more than any other member of the Cabinet for its purchase. A firm in Brisbane tendered for it, and, although its price was practically on a par with the price paid in New South

Wales, it received merely a curt note saying that its tender could not be accepted and returning its cheque, whilst the trawler was purchased in New South Wales. Thus did the Government encourage local enterprise and help Queensland along, and yet at that very time that firm had hardly anyone in its employ, so depressed was the trade. I am prepared to admit that there were some differences between the firm and the Government with respect to the specifications, but no effort was made to see if they could be overcome and the trawler built here.

The TREASURER: Do you know the terms of the tender?

Mr. TAYLOR: I have seen the tender and everything associated with it, and I know more about it than the Treasurer. It is true that the local firm was going to take a longer time than the Government wanted.

The TREASURER: Three years.

Mr. TAYLOR: No.

The PREMIER: There was no time limit.

Mr. TAYLOR: The trawler was to be delivered, according to the answer of the Premier in this House, somewhere about September in a particular year; but he got it in March or April of the following year, or just about the time when the first trawler was to have been delivered by the Brisbane firm. The Government paid the New South Wales Government £32,000 for the trawler. They offered it the other day for £25,000, and they would be very glad to take £10,000 or £12,000 for it at the present moment. Of that purchase money £10,668 is at present charged to loan. Unless action is taken to dispose of the trawler, there will be a further loss by depreciation. The trawler has been out of commission for about eleven or twelve months. If the Treasurer and the Premier had taken some of the good advice that I and other hon. members on this side have given them, they would not be in such a hard-up position as they have been in during the past few months. During the life of this trawler it has absorbed £13,792 from Consolidated Revenue, in addition to £10,688 from the Loan Fund. Even if it were sold for £10,000 or £12,000 more than it cost, there would still have been a loss on the original price. That is one of the ventures that have been so disastrous to the State.

I now want to refer to that wonderful craft "Douglas Mawson." I find no fault with the Government for doing something at a time when, so far as they could see, there was no opportunity, other than by purchasing a boat, of supplying the wants of the people in the Gulf country. Any Government worthy of the name would have done the same. But the Government bought an unsuitable tub at a cost of £18,500, and they repaired it, bringing the cost up to £19,645. The loss on the "Douglas Mawson" has been £10,656. With respect to State enterprises the Government told the people from one end of the State to the other, "Put us in power. We will give you everything you want. Just put us in power. You will see what we can do." Yet the Government have had to go to a private firm and have subsidised them to run a boat to the Gulf. If the Government could only insure the "Douglas Mawson" and get someone to put a match to it, they would make a profit out of it. They should not insure it with the State Insurance Department, because there would be no profit made out of that.

Mr. Taylor.

I would like now to refer to the Auditor-General's report in dealing with the Jeffrey pulveriser. The report states—

"In August, 1920, the Jeffrey pulveriser was forwarded to the Guano Fertiliser Company, Rockhampton. This company agreed to pay rental for the machine at the rate of £3 per month, and obtained a purchase option over same. Only £4 ls. has so far been paid by the company, this amount being one month's rent and haulage charges. The debit outstanding at the 30th June, 1921, was £49 7s. 3d."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: We have received payment since then.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am very pleased to hear that. It is quite evident that the Government would not have found that out if it had not been pointed out in the Auditor-General's report. They would not have received any payment for it, because they evidently did not know anything at all about it until the Auditor-General's report referred to it here. Hon. members opposite are the men controlling the finances and destinies of Queensland. There is a debit balance altogether against this wonderful Jeffrey pulveriser amounting to £2,678 17s. 11d. The Auditor-General says—

"The debit balance, £2,678 17s. 11d., is represented by assets, the realisable value of which does not nearly reach that figure; consequently Consolidated Revenue will ultimately be charged with the loss."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: A pulveriser is one of the most important things in the State.

Mr. TAYLOR: Quite true, but not a pulveriser of that kind.

I will now deal with the State arsenic mine. The Treasurer knows very well that I had a conversation with him last year about that mine, and he knows that within three or four weeks of that conversation arsenic was put up about £20 or £30 per ton. I asked the Treasurer how long they were going to carry on the arsenic mine in the way they were doing. I did not object to the charge of £10 per ton for the arsenic supplied to the Lands Department for the destruction of prickly-pear, but I objected to arsenic being supplied to outsiders at a price which meant a loss to the State. This wonderful arsenic mine is practically closed down now. The total expenditure on it since February, 1918, has been £58,000; and there is an amount of £46,800 owing to the Treasury for which the Treasury has not charged any interest. The Auditor-General's report should be sent to every person in the State who has a vote. Hon. members, in referring to the Auditor-General's report in connection with this matter, have stated, "He makes no comment." He could not make any comment. The figures speak for themselves! No comment was necessary. The total loss on that mine amounts to £7,249. It is now a question of the mine being a dead loss of £30,000 or £40,000 before it is all over. It is our duty to criticise; and, if hon. members opposite can find anything that will come anywhere near their record, I will stop criticising.

I come now to the State Produce Agency. There are no figures in the Auditor-General's report concerning that.

[Mr. Taylor.

The PREMIER: What about the tickets on the railway wagons?

Mr. TAYLOR: A ticket on the hon. gentleman would not be worth very much. A shipment of wheat was made last year, about which certain questions were asked in the House, and the replies given were not in accordance with fact. The wheat left Queensland in November or December last for London. We were told that it was sent on consignment account, to be sold in London on behalf of the State Produce Agency. In the latest reply we have received we were told that the Government have not had the account sales. The loss will certainly be between £10,000 and £15,000. They told us that the manager of the State Produce Agency bought the whole of these goods without authority; that he bought goods in May and June last year, and held them in stock until November or December; and that he sold chaff in Brisbane at £3 per ton which cost the agency £7 or £8 per ton. Yet Ministers tell us that these goods were bought and paid for, in some cases, nearly twelve months ago; and, in the case of the wheat, probably six months ago.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The purchases were all made within the period of one month.

Mr. TAYLOR: Stock was taken, I presume, at the State Produce Agency on 30th June last, and we shall not know until 30th June next what the actual loss is. When the State agency record comes to be written up, if the loss is only £25,000, I think the Government will get off very lightly; but I do not think that that amount will cover the loss.

The total indebtedness of the Bowen Coal-mine to the Treasury at 30th June last was £41,654 13s. 11d.; and the Auditor-General said—

"This undertaking had not arrived at the producing stage at 30th June, 1921."

The PREMIER: That is not a fact.

Mr. TAYLOR: I prefer to take the Auditor-General's report—

"The indebtedness to the Treasury at 30th June, 1921, was £41,654 13s. 11d., consisting of the following:—

	£	s.	d.
Total expenditure since commencement of operations ...	41,879	8	10
Total revenue since commencement of operations ...	224	14	11
Balance ...	Dr. £41,654	13	11
This expenditure has been debited as under—			
	£	s.	d.
1. From inception to 30th June, 1919, to State Enterprises Fund ...	2,365	8	2
2. From 1st July, 1919, to 30th June, 1921, to Department of Mines ...	39,289	5	9
	£41,654	13	11

"The attention of the Mines Department has been directed to the necessity for amalgamating these entries. Interest and redemption to 30th June, 1921, have been charged on item 1, and debited to the State Enterprises Trust Account, but no similar charge has been made in connection with item No. 2."

That is the way we get a surplus, and that is the way the State enterprises are being

carried on. If the Premier should be in office for another three years, I am sure he will never start another State enterprise.

With regard to the Baralaba State Coalmine, the Auditor-General says—

	£	s.	d.
"The total indebtedness to the Treasury at 30th June, 1921, was ...	13,393	9	2
consisting of the following:—			
Total expenditure £10,973 12 6			
Total revenue ...	5,575	3	6
	Dr.13,393	9	2

"All expenditure has been debited to Loan Fund, and no interest has so far been charged thereon.

"Work was commenced in March, 1919, on shaft No. 1, but the coal therefrom proved unsatisfactory; consequently the shaft was abandoned. The total cost of these operations, £3,756 2s. 9d., is therefore a loss, and is being written off over a period of twenty years."

Any one would think we were getting our money for nothing—

"A prospecting shaft was begun on the present site in January, 1920, and, the coal proving satisfactory, a working shaft was commenced in September, 1920. The mine was considered to have reached the productive stage in January, 1921, from which date 8,294 tons of coal had been mined.

"The cost of production has been 17s. 10d. per ton, and 8,091 tons of coal had been disposed of, mostly to the Railway Department, at a tentative selling price of 14s. 9d. per ton.

"The loss to date, exclusive of interest on the Treasury overdraft, has been £1,387 5s. 10d."

That is another of the State enterprises that we are carrying on at the present time, and in connection with which the taxpayers of Queensland are being bled white.

Then we come to the Styx River Coalmine—

	Debit.
"The Treasury overdraft at 30th June, 1921, was ...	£7,699 14 7
comprised of the following:—	
Total expenditure ...	£14,305 15 6
Total collections ...	6,606 0 11
	£7,699 14 7

"Expenditure has been charged to Loan Fund, but interest has not been debited thereon."

In the whole of the State enterprises, involving an expenditure of tens of thousands of pounds, no interest has been charged in any shape or form. Continuing, the Auditor-General said—

"Prospecting work was commenced in October, 1918, and the first coal was disposed of in August, 1919, the seam being in a very disturbed area. Further expenditure on shaft No. 1 incurred this year amounted to £3,799 19s. 4d., and the sales of coal won during the course of these operations realised £3,457 2s. 1d.

"The sinking of a new shaft (No. 2) was commenced in March, 1921, the expenditure thereon at 30th June, 1921, being £1,341 13s. 2d."

Now we come to the State batteries, in regard to which we are told by the Auditor-General—

"The following is a summary of the financial transactions at each battery:—

Venus Battery, Charters Towers.—The excess of working expenses over revenue since inception (August, 1919) was £216 1s. 8d. Charges written off as irrecoverable amounted to £175 5s. 9d.; and the excess of expenditure over collections at 30th June, 1921, was £2,259 14s. 1d.

Bamford Battery.—Excess of working expenses over revenue this year was £655 6s. 2d., making the total loss on working operations, since inception, £4,049 6s. 8d. The total net cost of the battery to 30th June, 1921, was £13,235 4s. 6d.

Kidston Battery.—A new battery is in course of construction at Kidston. The total cost to 30th June, 1921, was £4,562 12s. 9d. The amount authorised by Executive minute of 26th August, 1920, for this purpose was £5,000. Construction work is nearing completion."

That is another battery, which will be the same as the rest of them when it starts operations.

The Roma Oil Bore was started many years ago, and up to a certain point it was a justifiable expenditure, because there was every reason to believe that payable supplies of oil would be found at Roma. But during the last eighteen months or two years, when difficulties presented themselves, the department should not have relied solely on the departmental officers. They should have brought in experts or let the thing under contract. Although I do not find fault with the money spent on the Roma Oil Bore, if they had let the work of finding that broken bit to some of the firms in Queensland, they would probably have saved thousands of pounds. That bore has cost the State £29,951, and we have not received a copper of revenue from that expenditure.

Now we come to the State Iron and Steel Works, in regard to which the Auditor-General says that the expenditure last year was £5,028, and the total expenditure up to the present time £16,236. That includes £2,048 expenses of Messrs. Brophy, Cullen, and Jackson on their visit to Yampi Sound, and boring there, and £3,000 for the option on the Yampi Sound iron deposits. The report says—

"In addition to the above expenditure, debentures to the value of £30,000 have been issued under the Loan Act of 1913 for a lease of Yampi Sound for a period of twenty-one years, with the right of renewal for a further term of twenty-one years. These debentures bear interest at the rate of 6 per cent., and mature on 1st November, 1930.

"The work accomplished to date includes the preparation of plans, estimates of cost, and survey of the site of the proposed works at Bowen."

I only hope the Government will recover that amount; but, if the Government could get the Broker Hill people to purchase their option in connection with the iron ore deposit, they would be well advised to get rid of it.

Now we come to the wonderful State enterprise known as the Warra State Coalmine.

Mr. Taylor.]

The Auditor-General says, in regard to that mine—

"During the year sales of plant realised £7,041 0s. 10d., making a total of £3,166 9s. 7d. since 1st July, 1919, which has been credited to Consolidated Revenue Fund as an offset against the amount of £47,453 charged thereto as at 30th June, 1919."

It is time the Government altered their policy in connection with the affairs of this State and allowed someone else to conduct them in a more satisfactory manner.

The next matter is the State Smelters, Ore Reduction, and Treatment Works. In that connection there has been advanced from Loan no less a sum than £249,947, and the purchase of debentures £42,265, making a total of £292,212. The loss for the last twelve months was £43,075, and the previous year's profit was £1,375. This is what the Auditor-General says in regard to these smelters—

"I deem it advisable that honourable members should be furnished with the fullest available information in respect to this undertaking."

There is a short sentence full of meat, and I hope in connection with the finances of Queensland that the Treasurer and Premier will be more careful in the future than they have been in the past. If they told what they believe in their hearts in regard to State enterprises, they would tell the people that they would never touch them again. I beg to second the motion.

The PREMIER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): The leader of the Opposition, in moving this motion, based his main charges, if they can be dignified by the term of charges, upon an ex-parte statement placed in his hands by a dismissed public servant. If the hon. member had approached the Minister on the matter, he could have had a full reply to all the puerile statements placed in his hands by the man Gallagher. I do not regard the charges made by the hon. member as worthy of too much notice. It is quite obvious that the hon. member has tried to embarrass the Government by starting a long day-after-day discussion on stale matters referred to by himself and the leader of the National party—matters that have been mentioned time after time in this Parliament during the present session and in the past session. Therefore it is not my intention to treat the want of confidence motion as being worthy of any notice. I therefore move—

"That the question be now put."

Question—That the question be now put—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 35.

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

Tellers: Mr. Bulcock and Mr. Conroy.

[*Mr. Taylor.*]

NOES, 34.

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	" Vowles
" Green	" Walker
" Jones	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Costello and Mr. Logan.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Collins. No—Mr. Peterson.

Resolved in the affirmative.

Question—Want of confidence motion (*Mr. Vowles*)—put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 34.

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	" Vowles
" Green	" Walker
" Jones	" Warren

Tellers: Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Fry.

NOES, 35.

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

Tellers: Mr. Foley and Mr. Forde.

PAIR.

Aye—Mr. Peterson. No—Mr. Collins.

Resolved in the negative.

[12.30 a.m.]

ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—That the House do now adjourn.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 12.30 a.m.