

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates  
[Hansard]

**Legislative Assembly**

**THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 1922**

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

“The request will be considered by Cabinet when surveyors are available.”

ABSENCE OF AGENT-GENERAL FROM LUNCHEON GIVEN BY AUSTRALIAN COTTON GROWERS' ASSOCIATION.

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) asked the Premier—

“1. Has his attention been drawn to a cabled report appearing in the ‘Brisbane Courier,’ under date of 28th July last, headed ‘Empire Cotton’?”

“2. If so, did he notice that in the said report, whilst the names of most of the other Agents-General of Australia were mentioned as being present, Queensland's Agent-General was not amongst them?”

“3. In view of the importance of the cotton industry to Queensland, will he inform the House whether this was due to the absence of the Queensland Agent-General from the gathering, or neglect on the part of the Press to publish his name amongst those present?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. Yes.

“3. The cables and letters received from the Agent-General show that he has already done more useful and solid work for the Australian cotton industry than if he had attended a dozen of the Carlton Hotel champagne luncheons to which the hon. member refers. Before Mr. Fihelly left Queensland he publicly said he would shun the festive portion of the Agent-General's duties in favour of the practical side, and I confidently expected that the hon. member would be the last person in this House to condemn him, even by innuendo, for keeping his promise.”

(Opposition laughter.)

THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST, 1922.

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

LAND TAX ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

ASSENT.

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

QUESTIONS.

COTTON-GROWING CAPABILITIES OF COUNTRY BETWEEN ETON AND NEBO.

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

“Will he have a report made upon the capabilities of the country lying between Eton and Nebo, and surrounding Nebo, for the successful growth of cotton?”

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

“The itinerary of Mr. Brooks, Instructor in Agriculture, provides for a visit to this portion of his district this month, so that his report will reach me in due course.”

COST OF CONSTRUCTING RAILWAY TO EUNGELLA TABLELAND.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Secretary for Railways—

“In view of the rich agricultural timber and mining resources of the Eungella tableland and the region immediately behind it, will he get a report made by the Public Works Commission, or through some other means, upon the cost of constructing a railway from the present Mackay line to the top of the range?”

REVISION OF ELECTORAL ROLLS BY POLICE.

HON. W. H. BARNES asked the Attorney-General—

“1. Have the police been instructed to go through their various districts with a view of dealing with the electoral rolls and bringing them up to date?”

“2. When was this work last undertaken, if the work has not recently been done?”

“3. Is it his intention to arrange for this work being again undertaken in the near future?”

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

“1. Yes.

“2. This work is done periodically.

“3. See answer to No. 1.”

CONSTRUCTION OF LONGREACH-WINTON RAILWAY.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

“Will any provision be made on the new Estimates to enable work to be

recommenced during the present financial year on the Longreach-Winton Railway?"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"Yes; provision will be made on the new Estimates to enable work to be recommenced on the Longreach-Winton Railway."

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!  
(Opposition laughter.)

NORTH COAST RAILWAY—CONNECTION BETWEEN FARLEIGH AND PROSERPINE.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"If reasonable financial provision will be made on the Estimates to continue satisfactory working on the North Coast Railway line between Farleigh and Proserpine, so as to enable through rail communication to be made with Townsville as early as possible."

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"Yes; provision will be made in the 1922-23 Estimates to enable work to be proceeded with on the North Coast line satisfactorily and expeditiously."

(Opposition laughter.)

CONSTRUCTION OF GOONDOON-KALLIWA RAILWAY.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*), without notice, asked the Secretary for Railways—

"Will provision be made on this year's Estimates for the completion of the Goondoon-Kalliwa line?" (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS replied—

"These questions without notice are becoming rather embarrassing. (Laughter.) When answering the two previous questions, I was speaking from memory. My knowledge of the Estimates is just about exhausted in those replies. (Renewed laughter.) Therefore I will ask the hon. member to give notice of the question for to-morrow."

(Laughter.)

PAPERS.

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

Second report on the creation, inscription, and issue of Government Inscribed stock.

Report by the Under Secretary for Public Lands under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Acts, 1917-1920.

Return in accordance with Section 9 of the Mining Machinery Advances Act of 1906.

PRIMARY PRODUCERS' ORGANISATION BILL.

THIRD READING.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. W. N. Gillies, *Eacham*): I beg to move—

"That the Bill be now read a third time."

Question put and passed.

REDISTRIBUTION OF SEATS.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF ELECTORAL DISTRICTS ACT.

On the Order of the Day being called for the resumption of the debate on Mr. Bebbington's motion—

"That in order to prevent further disfranchisement of country districts, it is necessary to amend Section 7 of 'The Electoral Districts Act of 1910' by repealing the words 'but in no case shall such quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less,' and inserting in lieu thereof, 'Provided that notwithstanding anything contained in this section or in the last preceding section, electoral districts which are wholly comprised within the boundaries of cities or towns shall have not less than 40 per cent. more electors than those of electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries, and electoral districts which comprise land partly within and partly without such boundaries shall have not less than 25 per cent. more electors than those of electoral districts which are wholly beyond such boundaries.'"

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*) said: When the time for private members' business expired at 6 o'clock a fortnight ago, I was in possession of the floor and desired to say something on this motion. I want to assure the hon. member for Drayton that my rising to speak was not with the object of blocking his motion, and I am very glad indeed that altered circumstances have made it possible for the hon. member to address the House in a condition of health very much more satisfactory than that in which he found himself when he moved his motion. (Hear, hear!) I am sure we were all deeply sorry that the hon. member, from the condition of health to which I refer, found it so distressing to speak on that occasion, and I am perfectly certain that, when he has the opportunity to reply to-day, he will furnish this House with information which will be acceptable to hon. members.

The reason for my rising to speak on this motion was primarily to say two things. One is that for many years past, as a member of this House, and even during the period when I was out of the House, I have advocated a redistribution of seats, for which, I take it, there was abundant reason, and that advocacy was not caused by any desire to hurt or injure the Country party or the country districts. In that connection I ought to make perfectly clear the position I took up in 1920. I hold in my hand a copy of my address to the electors, in which this reference was made to a redistribution of seats—

"Every citizen has a right to take part in an election. Adequate protection should be given to the country voter, and the electors of the country, who are developing the State, should have a smaller margin, so far as members are concerned, in their favour, than in the more thickly populated districts. (The National party policy is national)."

I take it that no man who knows Queensland, or anything of the needs of Queensland, can go in any other direction than that of saying that the country districts should have a margin in their favour, so that they may have that representation which

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they deserve. I repeat that to-day. There was abundant reason for the reference which I have just read. To prove that such was the case, let me give some of the inequalities that existed at the time when the last general election took place. The Bulimba roll contained the following numbers of electors for the last three elections:—

1915 election ...	7,946 electors.
1918 election ...	10,647 electors.
1920 election, over	12,000 electors.

Let me compare with that the numbers of electors on the Chillagoe roll at those same periods—

1915 election ...	2,093 electors.
1918 election ...	1,795 electors.
1920 election ...	2,191 electors.

No one can say it is just for one electorate to have over 12,000 electors and another only about 2,000. The Premier was very fortunate in that particular regard. The Electoral Districts Act of 1910 contained absolutely fair provisions which, if carried out, would meet the requirements of the country. My esteemed friend the hon. member for Albert was connected with the passage of that Act. I am quite sure that anyone who knows him realises how fair he is—that he is not one to inflict an injustice upon the country districts or upon any part of this great State. I have not had time to go through the rolls which recently have been prepared. I contend that we should carry out the provisions of the original Act. One of the sections of that Act which by this motion it is proposed shall be amended—section 7—reads—

“In making the division, consideration shall be given by the Commissioners to—

(a) Community or diversity of interest;

(b) Means of communication;

(c) Physical features;

(d) The area of proposed districts which do not comprise any part of a city or town;

and subject thereto the quota of electors shall be the basis for the division of the State into electoral districts, and the Commissioners may adopt a margin of allowance to be used wherever necessary, but in no case shall such quota be departed from to a greater extent than one-fifth more or one-fifth less.”

I hold that the hon. member who has moved this motion could very much more easily have compassed what he requires by asking for the amendment of that section 7 in one particular. You may have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that I laid emphasis upon the word “may” in the concluding paragraph. I take it that the reason for the motion, very largely, is the fact that the hon. member is satisfied that the provisions of the Act were not carried out in connection with the redistribution of last year.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: It seems to me that the hon. member could have got over the difficulty by proposing the substitution of “shall” for “may”; that would have made it imperative to adopt a margin of allowance. I believe I am right in saying that the members of the Nationalist party are quite prepared to support that amendment; they believe it is only just and right; and, if the opportunity is afforded, that is what they will vote for. I suggest, not in any

unfriendly spirit, that the motion as worded will not secure what the hon. member is after, but rather will lead to embarrassment. I would very earnestly suggest that the hon. member agree to amend his motion by saying that it “shall” be done, instead of that it “may” be done. This motion has to do with the affairs and the interests of this great State, and what man has no interest in this great State? I take it that every public man is taking a broad view of the interests of this great State.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They should do so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: That being so, anything that is done by any party of whatever name should not make it harder for the man who is making life and conditions in the city possible—I refer to the man on the land. I very heartily support anything in the direction of making it imperative that the quota of electors shall be in favour of the country. I want to avoid the narrow and parochial view taken by some hon. members. I am prepared to admit that whatever one's intentions may be, sometimes there is very great danger in looking at matters from a narrow and parochial point of view. To avoid any view that may be narrow, let me say that the fact of any electorate being near the city does not always mean less work, less trouble, and less expense to the member for that district. I represent an electorate which contains more electors, and I think it has in it more show societies, than any other electorate in the State. That shows how alive the people are, and how they are in keeping with their member, who believes in keeping alive. Anyone knows that a district which is growing rapidly brings with it a certain amount of obligation, and we have got to realise to-day that the great democratic principle of one adult one vote should be as far as possible united with what is just for the country, and, so far as I am concerned, and I believe every member of the National party, we will every time vote in favour of giving a fair proportion of representation to the country districts.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Droyton*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member can speak in reply at the close of the debate.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): The Electoral Districts Act was more or less experimental. Before that Act was enacted we had a number of double electorates, and it was apparent to the community that differences had arisen that rendered it essential that a redistribution of seats should take place, and it was generally accepted that better representation could be obtained by the creation of single electorates rather than by continuing the system of double electorates. As I have already said, the Act was more or less experimental, but we strove, as far as it was possible with justice and equity, to evolve such a measure as would give fair representation, not alone to the electors who were congregated in our centres of population, but also to those who were settled in the country portions of the State; and, in order to bring that about, the Commissioners had it in their discretion to apportion a smaller [4 p.m.] number of electors to a country electorate than to a city electorate. It must be apparent to every thinking member of the community that in

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many instances it is absolutely necessary and essential that the country districts of the State should, so far as the number of electors is concerned, have a larger representation than the cities, as the different problems to be solved by those who are developing our country districts are far greater than those experienced in the larger centres of population. It was further realised that practically every member of this House really acted as a representative of the capital city; that, living in Brisbane for certainly almost half the year, they naturally were interested in the different matters affecting the capital city; so that, although the representation of the capital so far as numbers go might be less than that of the country districts, every member practically acted as a city representative. That that is so is undoubted and unquestioned. The Commission which was appointed for the purpose of effecting the first redistribution under the Electoral Districts Act of 1910 comprised one member who occupied the position of a senior police magistrate, and who had resided for many years in the Northern portion of the State, and was well known in the North.

MR. WELLINGTON: Marsland and Marsland, solicitors, of Charters Towers, know him.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If the hon. member would speak when he might add something of value to the debate, and remain silent when he does not do so, he would be a far more effective member than he is.

MR. WELLINGTON: I look after my electorate.

HON. J. G. APPEL: That gentleman was selected because he had the confidence of every man in the northern part of Queensland. He had resided there for many years, and in the opinion of every reputable member of the community he was esteemed and respected in that portion of the State. The Assistant Under Secretary of the Home Department at the time was naturally selected because of his knowledge of electoral matters, and Mr. McLennan was selected from the fact that by profession he was a surveyor and a man who, from his long experience in the State, had a knowledge of those requirements which are set out in the Act—that is community of interest, the question of roads, and the physical features of the different electorates. It is a singular thing—speaking from memory—that not one member of the then Opposition raised any serious objection to the boundaries of the electorates under the redistribution which was made by that Commission, but there were certain members of the Government party who made strenuous objection to the boundaries as they were delineated by the Commission. I took the stand in connection with that matter that I would not interfere—nor did I—with the work of the Commission. When members who had any objection to make came to me, I referred them to the Commission, declining in any way to interfere with the work of that Commission. Those are the facts so far as that Commission is concerned. In common with every hon. member, I urged that a further redistribution should take place. It was apparent to every member of the community that, since the redistribution under the 1910 Act had been made, great differences in population had taken place in the State, and that there were inequalities which it was absolutely necessary should be adjusted. In some

country districts, more particularly in the mining centres owing to the decadence of mining, the population had decreased, whilst in suburban areas the population had vastly increased. I am not going to adopt the attitude of hon. gentlemen sitting on the front bench opposite and of their supporters, and accuse the last Commission of venality, though they accused us in connection with the redistribution under the 1910 Act of having gerrymandered the different electorates. I venture to say that is not so. No objection was made on that ground by any member who then occupied a seat in this Assembly. Can any hon. member of this House who had a knowledge of the boundaries of the redistributed electorates say that the requirements of the Act have been fulfilled in connection with the present redistribution? We know, as a matter of fact, that in some cases portions of an electorate have been severed from it and added to another electorate, and those portions so severed have absolutely no community of interest with the electorates to which they have been added, have no road communication, and have no interests in common. Yet redistribution on those lines has been made, and we may well ask ourselves, without in any way reflecting upon the members of the Commission, what is the reason the lines which are laid down in the Act have not been followed in connection with certain electorates represented by hon. members on this side. Let the electors judge upon that question, as I have no doubt they will when the occasion arises. No one, save members representing country electorates, has any idea of the problems which occur from day to day and the amount of work which devolves upon members representing country electorates as compared with the duties which devolve upon members who represent city or suburban constituencies. As has been pointed out by some hon. members who have spoken, there are city constituencies in which there are only one, two, or three State schools. The electorate of Albert, which I represent, contains within its area something like sixty State schools, and almost every month some business arises in connection with those schools. The object of this motion, I take it, in view of the problems which arise in the country and which do not operate in connection with city or suburban constituencies, is to provide that those who are prepared to go out and brave the hardships in the country should have a greater parliamentary representation than those who are in the cities, who have not so much to contend with. I was very pleased to hear the expression of opinion which fell from the hon. member for Bulimba. The actual wording of the Act—one-fifth more or one-fifth less—really covers the motion of the hon. member for Drayton.

MR. BEBBINGTON: Hear, hear!

HON. J. G. APPEL: We may differ as to the actual proportions—the hon. member may have proposed too hard and fast a line—but, as I have said, we have to realise that the problems in the country districts are far greater than those which arise in city areas. The interests of the country districts are such as must commend themselves to all who desire to see that justice is done. It is only by activity on the part of country representatives that it is possible to have the just claims of the country districts recognised, and without such recognition it is impossible to keep the people on

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the land or induce further settlement. Without the development of our country lands, the whole State must come to a standstill. It is only by doing all we can to settle the country districts, and giving every advantage possible in that direction, that we shall be able to induce people to leave the pleasures, conveniences, and comforts of city life to go upon the land. I speak from experience, and it is only by country representatives continually bringing the claims of their constituents, not only before the House but before the different departments, that it is possible to secure justice for them. I trust that the motion moved by the hon. member for Drayton, who takes the keenest interest in land settlement and the prosperity of those who settle on the land, will be carried.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I do not wish to give a silent vote on this motion. Whilst I support the principle and contend that it is a good one, and whilst I claim that that principle is wrapped up in the existing Act, I think we should be a little cautious in dealing with this matter at the present moment. I am not altogether satisfied with the 40 per cent. difference between city and country electorates, as set out in the resolution. There are townships in most of our country electorates which make the problem difficult, as they are still country districts. People in rural districts do not wish to make any unjust claims, and, if it can be arranged that one-fifth below the quota might be the maximum for country districts, and one-fifth above the minimum for metropolitan districts, as provided by the existing Act, I think that it is necessary that there should be a safeguard. This motion certainly provides for a safeguard, but it is not too clear as to what that safeguard is. It appears to me to provide a margin in all cases of 40 per cent., although it may be read in another way. If the present Act was carried out in the spirit in which it was passed, it would give to the country districts the representation which is necessary. The Act provides at the same time for community of interests and other features which are to guide the Commissioners in their adjudication in regard to our electoral boundaries. I know that in my own electorate there has been added an area which makes the electorate extend from the Dalby electorate up to the Mount Morgan electorate—taking in from Dawes Range up to Mount Morgan. There is no community of interest between this added area and the Central Burnett.

The PREMIER: Your proposal to have fewer members would not decrease the difficulty.

Mr. CORSER: We have not got fewer members.

The PREMIER: That is what you are advocating.

Mr. CORSER: I have not advocated it at the present time. We are now speaking of the average number of voters for each electorate. If the Government make provision for a reduction in the number of members, we should know what that reduction will be.

The PREMIER: You would have areas twice the present size.

Mr. CORSER: We would have areas one-third larger; it all depends upon the number of members. Under the Act the Commissioners are supposed to be guided by community of interest, means of communication, and physical features. Take the Dawes

Range, it is impossible to get over the range. Even the Government do not intend that their railway shall go over the range—they are going through it. There are no means of getting to this added area lying to the north of Dawes Range—we shall have to go round by Port Curtis or Mount Morgan—and that area has no community of interest at all with the rest of the electorate. So that there was something else that guided the Commissioners in arriving at those boundaries.

The PREMIER: If any of the Opposition require it, I will provide an aeroplane to enable them to go round. (Laughter.)

Mr. CORSER: The Premier arranged to go round in an aeroplane himself during one election, but somebody was said to have rammed a file or a screw-wrench into the engine. During the same election I made an offer to my opponent to supply him with an aeroplane. (Laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. CORSER: I am afraid that some other influences guided the Commissioners on this occasion. It has been said by members on the Government side that, when the Commissioners redistributed the seats on the previous occasion, they were not guided by the spirit of the Act, and that they did not submit a fair redistribution. At any rate, that redistribution enabled the present Government to get into office by a two-to-one majority, so that it ought to have been fair enough for them. On this occasion the Commissioners were guided more by something political than by the Act. It was like stacking a pack of cards for the people to deal at the next election.

Mr. PEASE: When is that coming along?

Mr. CORSER: Very probably in October. I do not think hon. members opposite know the exact moment when the elections will take place.

Mr. PEASE: Do you know?

Mr. CORSER: I have a very good idea.

Mr. KIRWAN: Are you going by Tuesday's "Mail"?

Mr. CORSER: There are thirty-five reasons on the Government side why the elections should not be held too early.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: And how many on your side?

The SPEAKER: Order! I hope the hon. member for Burnett will confine his remarks to the question before the House.

Mr. CORSER: I was endeavouring not to be led off the track by hon. members opposite. We want to get the true reflex of the people at the next election. We want to get fair representation for the whole of the State, and to do that we must give a fair quota to the outlying districts. To do that we must have a clean roll. Under the present Act it is impossible for us to have a clean roll. All the electoral rolls in the State are "faked" at the present time. We know that men can be put on railway works in different parts of the State, and that they can be enrolled for the electorate in which they are working. We should give the country districts a better quota than they have at the present time.

Mr. PEASE: You say we have lost the confidence of the workers; so the more of those people who are put on the rolls the better for you.

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Mr. CORSER: I am talking about the men on the job.

Mr. PEASE: Whom do they vote for?

Mr. CORSER: They are workers. They are all right. They are with us.

Mr. KIRWAN: Then what are you worrying about?

Mr. CORSER: I am talking about the political part of it. It is difficult enough for the people in the country to record their votes, and we should consider that and allow them a better quota. We know how difficult it is to get about the country in the wet weather, but the present Government will not allow postal voting. Even if an elector lives 50 miles from a polling-booth he cannot vote by post. Under previous Governments the people in the country were better treated, because they could give postal votes. That privilege is denied to the country elector at present.

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now discussing the Elections Act. That is not the question before the House at the present time. I hope the hon. member will confine his remarks to the motion moved by the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. CORSER: I was endeavouring to show the disabilities that exist in the country as a justification for increasing the margin. We do not wish to harass the city people, but in the country we have greater difficulties to contend with, and we should have a larger margin. It is very hard to dissect the principles of the Act in discussing this motion.

Mr. KIRWAN: You have to dissect the principles of the motion. That is your duty.

Mr. CORSER: We have to dissect the hon. member's party at the next election. We want fair electoral districts. That is only fair in the interests of the country people. We do not want to be unfair to the city; we do not want to do anything to the detriment of the towns. It has been said that we who represent country districts are looking for something that will be to the detriment of the city people. It is not fair to say that, because we recognise that it is essential for all sections of the people in Queensland to be successful. It is necessary to make the country successful as well as the town. We want to build up both our primary and secondary industries, and we can only do that by receiving a margin for the country which is fair. In that way we shall get the representation that is desirable in the interests of the whole State, and have a Parliament here which is a true reflex of the whole of the people of the State, and particularly a reflex of the broadminded section who live in the country districts.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): Mr. Speaker—

The SPEAKER: Order! Before the hon. member speaks in reply, I would like to know if any other hon. member desires to speak, as the hon. member's speech will close the debate?

No other member rising.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*): I would like to say a few words in reply, because, when I introduced the motion, I was not able to do justice to it, and I was not able to explain it as well as I might have done. What the hon. member for Bulimba said is quite correct. He says that the word "shall" should be used in the Act instead of the word

"may." If that is done, it will provide for all that is required in the motion. I may say that the motion was framed by the Parliamentary draftsman. I told him just what we wanted, and he said that the wording in the motion was just as we required it. As the draftsman is a professional gentleman whose ability we do not doubt, we accepted his drafting, and I am sure the Attorney-General will also accept it. I feel sure that the motion will be agreed to by the House, but I do not say that it is an instruction to the Government to follow it exactly. It is really an instruction from this House that the Government shall take into consideration the question of giving the country districts fairer representation, and restoring, practically speaking, those four country electorates which have been disfranchised. I believe that there is a great future for Queensland, not only for primary produce, but also for manufacturers. I have travelled all over Queensland, right up as far as the Gulf country—I think I have travelled Queensland more than any man here—and I can say that the land which can be opened for cotton-growing is absolutely unlimited. In South Australia they can grow wheat on a very low rainfall—practically half the rainfall that we require—simply because the rain falls there just at the time of sowing. In Queensland we have millions of acres of land where the rain falls at the right time for planting cotton. In fact, our cotton areas are unlimited, and that is why we want to settle people there and help them to be successful. Now, if we are going to manufacture this cotton in our own country, as I hope we shall, and if we are going to manufacture also a very large amount of our raw produce which to-day

we are sending away, the cities [4.30 p.m.] will increase by leaps and bounds, and they will double their population in a very short time. But, if we are going to allow the same Act and the same principles as operated during the last redistribution of seats to continue, then we are going to have the country—which produces practically the whole of our wealth—disfranchised to all intents and purposes, and placed really under the domination of the cities. I am sure that we cannot have development under a system like that. There is no question which is such a burning question in the country as this action of the Government in disfranchising country electorates. Very little alteration in section 7 would do what we want, but that will be left to the Government which brings in the Bill. I certainly hope that the Government will bring in a Bill embodying the principles I have outlined in a very short time. In fact, I think this side of the House would give to the Government a lease of life for another six months to enable them to bring in the Bill and carry the principle of the motion into effect.

Mr. KIRWAN: And find a seat for you. (Government laughter.) Would you make it six years if we found a seat for you?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I think six months would be ample in which to do the business. It would take six months to pass a new Act and have a redistribution properly carried out. A great injustice has certainly been done to the country people of the State. I am not going to say that it has been done by the Commissioners. Those three gentlemen are respected in their different businesses and their position in the public service. They

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are not incompetent men, but they made an incompetent job of this.

Mr. CLAYTON: And they got two hundred guineas each.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No one can say that it is not a vast blot, a big blunder, whether it has been done at the instigation of the Government or whether they have blundered themselves. If they have blundered themselves, then I say they have brought a disgrace on the public service of the State—I make no pretence about that. If it has been done at the instigation of the Government, then I say the Government have done a great injustice to the country by disfranchising practically 24,000 producers by reducing their representation in Parliament. I would like to give the Government a chance, since they seem to be repentant. The first fruits of repentance are the retracing of your steps and undoing the wrong that you have done. If the Government are sincerely repentant of the wrong they have done to the producers, let them now retrace their steps and undo some of the wrongs which they have inflicted upon them. Let us see justice done, even though the heavens fall.

It is easy for me to show that these wrongs have been done. I need cite only a few cases. On the one hand, we have the electorate of Gympie, a city electorate probably not a square mile in area—you could go through it before breakfast, and not have to be up very early at that—with 5,076 electors; and, on the other hand, Warrego, represented by a Government member, with 5,034 electors—practically the same number of electors, but no less than 160,363 square miles in area. Can you think of a Commissioner—I do not care who he is—who could reasonably put 160,363 square miles into an electorate under those circumstances?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: If we did what you propose, we would make them bigger.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: No. You should put another couple of thousand on to the city electorates. The Commissioners could put 2,000 on to the Brisbane or the Gympie electorates, and 2,000 less on to the Warrego or other similar electorate. You would then have electorates of a reasonable size, and members would be able to represent them in something like fair style. As I have already said, Brisbane contains 6,310 electors; Drayton, 6,215; Merthyr, 6,502—city electorates—and Murilla—a country electorate—5,891. There has been no attempt whatever in those cases to carry out the Act, which allows one-fifth over or one-fifth under the quota. Had the Act been carried out, we should have had at least reasonable representation of the country districts, and there would have been no great blot, such as has been brought upon the Government and the public service by the disfranchising of 24,000 country electors.

Mr. COLLINS: Country members on this side are not complaining.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: You dare not complain. You have to take what the Premier gives you.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member address the chair?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: There is not much more to say. I think every member in this House recognises that a great injustice has been done to country districts, and recognises that the Commissioners would not, and could not, have done what they did if they had

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been left free to do their own will. There are no three men in the public service who would have done it of their own free will, and the Government have to take the responsibility. The Commission was a muddle. There were too many members running in to give advice.

Mr. KIRWAN: And you were one of them. (Laughter.)

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am quite well aware of it; but I only did what other members did; and, if my advice had been taken, this great injustice would not have been inflicted on the people. I sincerely hope that the Government will put through a Bill and appoint a new Commission, and that the Commission will be an independent one, and one that will carry out the work in the interests of the State.

Question (*Mr. Bebbington's motion*) put and passed.

#### RETRENCHMENT OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*), in moving—

“That there be laid upon the table of the House a return showing—

(1) The number of employees of the Government who have been deflated or retrenched for the year ended 30th June, 1922.

(2) The total amount of salaries and wages not paid in consequence of such deflation or retrenchment”—

said: I do not intend to speak on this motion; there really is nothing to say in connection with it. Why the Premier called “Not formal” to it I cannot understand; evidently he did not desire the information to be made public. It is information which, in my opinion, the public have a right to possess. On a great number of occasions in this House I have moved motions and asked questions in respect of information to which the public are entitled, and the Premier has always sidestepped supplying the information; why, I cannot understand. Surely the Government have nothing to hide! There should not be any reason why the number of men who have been deflated or retrenched during particular years should not be made public. Are the Government ashamed of the fact that they have broken their pledges to the workers?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: They ought to be.

Mr. MORGAN: They told the workers at one time that there would be no retrenchment, and that there would be no dismissals.

The SPEAKER: Order! Will the hon. member deal with the motion?

Mr. MORGAN: I am giving reasons why the Premier will not give the information and why we want it. I hope the House will pass the motion.

Question put and passed.

#### EXTENSION OF “THE CO-OPERATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION ACT OF 1914” TO SECONDARY INDUSTRIES.

Mr. BEBBINGTON (*Drayton*), in moving—

“That, in order to increase the manufacture of our raw material into saleable



goods and enable industrious workers to own shares in the means of wealth production, it is the opinion of this House that the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act of 1914 be extended to secondary industries"—

said: There is no necessity to say very much, as this matter has previously been before the House, and I think we all understand the meaning of the motion. We all realise that the labour difficulties at present are a great bar to the progress of Australia. I am not going to say whose fault it is; quite probably there are faults on both sides. We have in Australia perhaps the highest class of workers to be found in the world.

Mr. COLLINS: When did you wake up to that?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: They are looking for a greater interest than weekly wages in the industries in which they are engaged; they want to be able to use their brains as well as their physical powers. The worker of to-day wants to own the works, but he wants to earn by his own labour the right to own them. He is not going to follow the communism of hon. members opposite, but is going to follow the co-operation that is being advocated by hon. members on this side, and that is going to help him to own the means of wealth production.

Mr. COLLINS: Give us a definition of "communism."

Mr. BEBBINGTON: A socialist is a person who wants to divide with someone who has more than he has. (Laughter.) The communist goes further. Not satisfied with a division, he wants to seize everything and leave the owner practically nothing. We have seen that demonstrated in the seizing of the factories in Italy. We have seen it in Hungary, where the rights in property were forfeited during an all-night sitting of the Legislature. On 19th October, 1919, the people of Hungary went to bed owning their own property—as we in Queensland will do to-night. Their Legislature that night had an all-night sitting, and, when the people woke up the following morning, everything had been communised, and they owned practically nothing.

The SPEAKER: Order! I am allowing the hon. member a considerable amount of latitude; but I would point out that the motion deals with the Co-operative Agricultural Production Act, and I ask the hon. member to connect his remarks in some way with that Act.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: The hon. member for Bowen led me off the track by asking for a definition of "communism." I hope that the hon. member is satisfied with the definition I have given. Under co-operation the farmers have built up between eighty and ninety co-operative cheese factories and a large number of butter factories, some costing as much as £40,000. We had nothing when we started. I remember fourteen men with practically nothing sitting on logs on a Government reserve. At that spot there have sprung up two splendid cheese factories, which have not missed one payment for seventeen years. Why cannot workmen do the same? We believe they can. I was one of those responsible for placing the 1914 Act on the statute-book. That Act provides for the advancing of loans to build factories for the manufacture of our raw material. Under

the administration of the Denham Government, by whom the Act was passed, the maximum advance was only 50 per cent. of the value of the factory or works to be erected. I give this Government credit for having extended its provisions to enable the advances to total 6½ per cent. That money can be borrowed for a period of sixteen years. During the first two years, interest only—at the rate of 5 per cent. per annum—is payable. Repayments are made annually over the succeeding fourteen years. I have found that a very small sinking fund on the output of factories will clear those fourteen annual payments, so it is an excellent thing. Not a single penny of the money which has been loaned to producers to build factories has been lost.

At 4.50 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES (Mr. Kirwan, *Brisbane*) relieved the Speaker in the chair.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We claim that the industrial worker is just as honest and intellectual as the farmer. The industrial worker has as much common sense in the working of his factory for the manufacture of raw material and can accomplish what has been done by the farmer. It has been stated that the farmer is unorganised, but there is not a class in Queensland or Australia to-day which is organised for the manufacture of raw material as the farmer is organised. We find that some companies down South have erected factories that are practically owned by farmers, and have installed machinery to the value of £300,000. When we find men who can put that amount of machinery into factories, we must realise that they have made great progress. We contend that it is a crime to export the whole of the raw products of Queensland when we should be assisting our workers and any company that might be formed to manufacture them into finished articles. If a man should come along who is able to find the capital and the men will find the labour, there is no good reason why we should not bring labour and capital together to work in the interests of Queensland. The principle contained in the motion means that we should extend the Co-operative Agricultural Act of 1914 by giving to those engaged in secondary industries the assistance that has been extended to the workers engaged in the primary industries.

Mr. HARTLEY: Pure Sovietism.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: We have a large number of butter factories, some costing £40,000, and we have nearly ninety-four co-operative cheese factories worth from £90,000 to £100,000. Will anyone say that it is not to the advantage of Queensland to manufacture our raw material into saleable articles instead of sending the raw materials to other countries? Would not our cities bound ahead if the workers owned the factories or owned the industries? We would not then have the strikes and labour difficulties that we have experienced.

Mr. COLLINS: Are you referring to the strike in the United States of America?

Mr. BEBBINGTON: I am not interested in the United States of America; I am interested in Queensland. Queensland exports more raw material than any other State in Australia. Millions of pounds worth of raw material are leaving the shores of Queensland, and we are buying back the finished article and paying at least 200 per cent. in profit, and it is about time that we made every

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effort to assist our own working people as well as capitalists to start factories in Queensland in order to manufacture the goods here.

Mr. FRY (*Kurilpa*): I wish to second the motion moved by the hon. member for Drayton. He has placed a very good argument before this House in outlining his proposal that secondary industries should be established for the manufacture of raw materials. I can see very clearly that the hon. member has been directing his attention to the whole course through which our raw materials pass from the land to the consumer, and, representing, as I do, a city electorate, I think that is a right argument to be adopted by this House. Whilst we in this House have been advocating the production of raw material, very little attention has been given to the question of manufacturing that raw material into the finished article, with the result that our secondary industries have suffered. Our primary industries are being well looked after, and in the near future should show a considerable increase in production, and I hope that, while that increased development on the land is taking place, facilities will be made available for keeping the men on the land. We know that the greatest drawback to the producer who is making a living from the soil is the lack of suitable markets for his produce; and, if we had our own manufactories here, we could receive the raw material from the producer and manufacture it into the finished article, and distribute it through our various stores, and then we would be laying a foundation for a prosperous and industrious Australian nation. We all know that Queensland, along with other States, whilst producing raw material, is exporting that raw material overseas, and the finished article is bought back again at an enhanced price to cover the cost of manufacture and other expenses. Queensland has an opportunity which probably few other States in Australia has. We have at our hands all the raw material necessary to build up a very large manufacturing State, and we are in a position to carry out a very extensive scheme of industrial development. While the Government are endeavouring even at this eleventh hour to make some attempt to encourage primary production, they should also direct their attention to building, side by side with that production, factories that are going to receive the raw material and manufacture it into the finished article. That would mean that the man who goes on the land will have some assurance that, when he produces the raw material, there is someone near at hand to take charge of it and turn it into the manufactured article, and, if necessary, store it until there is a demand for its consumption. Side by side with such a scheme comes the utilisation of our railways, the building of our ports into commercial ports; and, as our industries increase and water is made available in an economical way under our water conservation and irrigation schemes, we would become not only a State producing raw material and manufacturing that raw material, but we would become an exporting State. No State can hope to be prosperous if it is going to manufacture and sell to itself alone. We must be in a position to manufacture our own raw products and export the surplus, because it is by exporting its surplus products that a nation becomes wealthy. In dealing with the growth of the United States of America all the arguments by the different authorities, when boiled down,

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point to the fact that we can, by the introduction of highly scientific machinery, produce and export to the world cheaper than that country. They manufacture [5 p.m.] and base their costs upon home consumption, and then send out the surplus to the world. By so doing, the United States of America have become one of the greatest and wealthiest exporting nations in the world.

Mr. COLLINS: And they have one of the biggest strikes on record at the present moment.

Mr. FRY: They may have one of the biggest strikes on record, but no one can deny the fact that America is one of the most prosperous nations in the world.

Mr. COLLINS: Then why this strike?

Mr. FRY: If they had many men in America like the hon. member for Bowen, they would have strikes every week, because nothing will satisfy the hon. member. He wants to quarrel with everyone. What I am aiming at is the providing of facilities by which our unemployed may secure employment and so be removed from the bread line. As it is, we have thousands of men in our midst who cannot get the opportunity of employment, and this motion will provide a remedy. We ask, first of all, that, while encouraging the production of raw materials, the Government should offer the same facilities to our secondary industries to convert the raw material into the finished article, thereby giving us an opportunity of becoming a large exporting State. No one can raise any objection to this very commendable proposal. The people of the State are in sympathy with the sentiments I have expressed, and I do not know that any hon. member will say that a policy which aims at the encouragement of secondary industries alongside primary production is going to make for anything but the welfare of the State. The State must benefit, and, with the general prosperous conditions which we hope will be brought about by the carrying of this resolution, means will be found for absorbing the unemployment.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): It is interesting to find this motion moved by the hon. member for Drayton.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: It is not the first time.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I know the hon. member has moved similar motions on other occasions; but the point I wish to make is this: That one often finds men putting forward advanced ideas and reforms who would be the least expected to put forward such ideas. This proposal is in that category.

Mr. MORGAN: Do you object to it?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Certainly not. The co-operative principle is one capable of very wide extension indeed, and along these lines there is ample room for development in Queensland and in Australia. I have long held the opinion that in regard to co-operation we have only touched the fringe of the subject. Anyone who has read the history of the co-operative movement; anyone who understands the pioneer work done by men such as Robert Owen, Holyoake, and others, who were the pioneers of this proposal, realises the advantages that may be gained from such a scheme.

Mr. BEBBINGTON: Why go to England? Why not stick to Australia?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Coming more properly to the motion and to satisfy the impatience of the hon. member for Drayton, I will now deal with matters as they affect Queensland, though one would naturally expect the hon. member to realise the advantages that will be gained from a consideration of what has taken place elsewhere. That is why I have made reference to it. If it can be made a success elsewhere, then it is worth our while studying it. If we can adapt it to our local conditions with advantage to ourselves, then it is up to us to do it. It will be noticed that in the principal Act a very wide application has been given to co-operation, and a great deal more could be done under that measure, even without the amendment that has been done. In section 2 of the principal Act "Primary Products" are defined thus—

"Butter, cheese, milk, bacon, flour, cornflour, cotton, grain meal, jam, and preserved fruits, and such other products of the soil as the Governor in Council may from time to time declare, by Order in Council, published in the 'Gazette.'"

Then the definition of "Works" reads—

"Any works or factory for the manufacture or cold storage of primary products and the by-products thereof, together with all machinery and appurtenances used therein or in connection therewith, and all tramways leading thereto, and the site of the works and all land used in connection with any such tramway."

So that it will be seen the possibilities under the existing Act have not been by any means exhausted. It is particularly opportune that a motion of this kind should be discussed in Parliament to-day, because we find that in Queensland and in Australia and throughout the world people are dealing with the question of the proper control of industry. Every reformer recognises that the existing system of control on the capitalistic basis leaves very much to be desired. Every student of the question will doubtless agree with that proposition, and various ideas have been advocated from time to time by various schools of thought, and I am applying myself this afternoon to the co-operative idea as one of the means whereby society can be improved; whereby industry can be improved; and whereby the conditions of those engaged in industry can be improved. We know that the co-operative principle, if applied properly and to any considerable extent, would completely replace the present methods of control. Some people have advocated this, and that is what is behind the motion of the hon. member for Drayton. Much progress can be made in Queensland if the principle is generally adopted. Up to the present co-operative effort has been largely confined to butter factories, cheese factories, and other purely agricultural industries.

MR. BEBBINGTON: The farmers are the only ones who have made any strides in connection with it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: They are the only people in Queensland who have made any considerable success of it. That success has been of advantage to the agricultural industry, and I think every one will admit has also been of general advantage to the State; and that benefit can be extended to quite a number

of industries. We know that co-operation in itself and carried on to a limited scale, will not accomplish everything that some of its advocates on some occasions claim for it. Take, for example, a co-operative society having control of a particular industry. That society might exploit the community, if it so desired, in the same way that existing joint stock companies do. If enterprises such as general trading, storekeeping, butchers' and bakers' shops, and so on, were owned and controlled by the workers engaged in them, and there was no control exercised by the community as a whole, it might mean that those workers, having only their own interest to conserve, might exploit the rest of the community in the same way as joint stock companies do. If they were in a position to control the supply of a given commodity, they could dictate to the rest of the community, who were the consumers of that article and not members of the co-operation, the conditions under which they should receive that particular service or commodity; but that is a thing that can be controlled by the community. Co-operative societies are not so likely to act anti-socially in that way, and they have not done so where they have been in operation. I remember working sixteen or seventeen years ago for a co-operative society which was a distributing association controlling all kinds of activities. The society produced clothing, furniture, and food, and ran grocers' shops, butchers' shops, and various other businesses. The society had its own staff to carry out the work. The employees were also members of the society, and when the overhead expenses were met in each department, the men engaged in each department shared in the distribution of any surplus which was available. As a result of that system, I was in receipt of something like 2d. per hour higher than the standard rate of wages prevailing at that time in my particular calling. That co-operative society was able to carry on with advantage to the members of the society and those who participated in its benefits.

Much has to be done in the way of educating people up to this idea. It is not enough to recommend that the workers should have control of industry; it is not enough to give allegiance to co-operation as a general principle; but, along with the adoption of the general principle, educative propaganda must be carried on. I for one believe in the workers having a say in the control of industry. I believe that the industries of Queensland and Australia can effectively be carried on by those engaged in them, and efforts must be made in the direction of inducing and training the workers to take more interest in their industries than has been the case in the past. We find that one reason why co-operation, guild socialism, or other things, have not been taken up successfully here is the fact that not enough propaganda has taken place, and the possibilities have not yet been realised. We must also educate people to take control of industries, and carry on all the ramifications of those industries. We know that by industry being carried on on the capitalistic basis of the subdivision of labour the tendency has been to make the worker more or less a cog in the machine. A worker to-day is often trained to perform one particular operation only, he learns to do it efficiently, and in a way which enables the article to be produced economically; but there are very few men in an average factory with the necessary knowledge to control the whole of the processes in that

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industry. The subdivision of labour at the present time, while it has eliminated waste and enabled industry to be carried on with more efficiency than was the case in the past, has been largely destructive of the workers' individuality, and that is not in itself a good thing for the community. Under any system whereby the workers were given control of industry some of these evil effects would be swept aside, and men having control of industry and sharing in the advantages and returns from it would naturally have a greater incentive to produce efficiently and effectively than they have at the present time.

MR. BEBBINGTON: And they would be socialists no more.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I would recommend the hon. member to give some thought to the question of socialism. No one advocating co-operation and understanding socialism could make such an interjection, because the pioneers of co-operation—those who understand it best—were also the pioneers of socialism.

MR. BEBBINGTON: No.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The co-operator and the socialist are both opposed to the present system of production for profit. The co-operator advocates a method by which to improve society, and the socialist and the co-operator can work hand in hand. Nearly all the large co-operative societies in Great Britain are controlled by men who are socialists. The Labour party in Great Britain is to a certain extent financed by co-operative societies. The managers of those associations are often political candidates and pay contributions to the funds of the Labour party, so to that extent there is a definite connection between the co-operator and the socialist. The co-operator stands for a system whereby those engaged in an industry shall gain control of it, and by the elimination of profit give to the members services at reasonable prices. That is what the co-operator advocates, and what the hon. member agrees with. That is what the socialist also says.

MR. BEBBINGTON: No.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I advise the hon. member to get a better idea of the elementary principles of socialism, and study the matter in conjunction with co-operation, and, if he does that, a ray of light may yet illuminate the dark recesses of his mind. It is also interesting in this connection that this motion should have been brought forward by a party which opposes the various planks in the Labour platform. If one cares to read the platform of the Labour party, which can be seen in almost any issue of the "Worker," or other Labour paper, he will find that co-operation is placed very largely in the forefront of the platform.

MR. BEBBINGTON: Have you done anything in it?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is intended to extend that principle, and give the workers engaged in any industry control of that industry.

MR. BEBBINGTON: You cannot extend what you have not begun.

At 5.20 p.m.,

The SPEAKER resumed the chair.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have begun, and it will be extended. Co-operation, so far as the distribution side is concerned, has been taken up pretty success-

fully in Queensland by the coalminers. At Booval there is a co-operative distributing society controlled by the miners, which was started by Mr. Gledson, a member of this House, and a member of this party. It is run very successfully, and is a distinct advantage to the miners and those living in that area. It can be extended; but it is well to remember what I said in the beginning—that a co-operative society is liable to the danger which is working within the existing system. A co-operative society, unless the public interests are safeguarded, might conduct its business similarly to any joint stock company. The only difference would be that the number of shareholders would probably be greater. I have in mind an institution in New Zealand. The last time I was in Melbourne I met a man from New Zealand—a most interesting personality—and among the various things he had been interested in at various times in his life was furniture making and cabinet making generally. A factory that he had been interested in was organised by him into a co-operative society where the shares were owned by the former workmen. The factory was run very successfully, but they did not give the community any advantage of their improved methods. They found that by controlling the industry they were able to make sufficient in thirty-six hours a week to pay the wages they formerly got in forty-eight hours; so that they maintained existing prices on reduced hours. That showed that the beneficial effect to the community from that co-operative society was nil. It merely changed the ownership; it did not mean any alteration in results. A co-operative society, to be run on proper lines and to be beneficial to the community, must always have regard to the public interest. I believe that any system that would be approved of by this Parliament would safeguard these things. I think that the hon. member who has moved this motion is going along right lines. It would be a very good thing for the workers of Queensland to apply themselves in the direction of getting more control of industry than they have at the present time. Men's ambitions and men's qualities should be cultivated and encouraged. I am satisfied that the majority of men do not want to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for a privileged class during the whole of their lifetime. Co-operation is one of the methods whereby they can give full play to their individuality, and whereby men who have the ability to organise and control industries have the opportunity of displaying that ability and the knowledge that is latent within them, and so benefit society.

MR. BEBBINGTON: Come over here.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Much can be done in that direction. I rose principally to draw attention to the fact that much can be done under the Act as it exists at the present time. It has not been taken advantage of in the way it might be taken advantage of if the public interest is awakened and propaganda along certain lines is engaged in. I am very pleased to know that the hon. member for Drayton has become so advanced that he is prepared to accept a portion at least of the Labour platform.

MR. BEBBINGTON: No; you have accepted ours.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member has unknowingly advocated this afternoon some of the principles of guild socialism. In that connection I may

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mention that the building trades in Great Britain have been able to exercise a big influence. The guilds there have to a large extent entered into the building industry, and have been able to compete on equal terms with large firms of contractors. They employ very large numbers of men on various buildings, and have been able to show that the workers, given the opportunity, can control their industries and can carry on all forms of human activities with advantage to themselves and to the public. Much can be done in this direction by way of educational propoganda. I hope that in the near future the interest of the people will be awakened to a greater extent than has been the case in the past, and that the time will not be far distant when the workers will assume a greater control in industry than they have in the past. I hope they will work along those lines, and train themselves and equip themselves to be able to take such control.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It is rather pleasing to know that the Government at last, through the voice of one of their Ministers, has realised that the hon. member for Drayton, who has at heart the principles of co-operation, is on right lines. The Minister's reasoning does not convince me that socialism and co-operation are the same things at all. While I have nothing against socialism, I have something against the people who advocate it. Indeed, that is all I have against it. At the same time, I am a great believer in co-operation. This is a small motion, and there is not very much in it, but it deals with the solution of a big problem. Years ago it was recognised that co-operation was better for the worker and for the solution of his troubles than big wages. If that had been generally believed, then the worker would have been in a much better position to-day. The worker has always been spoken of as being "the under dog," but it would not be so under co-operation. What co-operation has done for the producer I am sure can be done equally as well for the worker. It is a great pity that we have not recognised more of the advantages of co-operation. We know what organisation and co-operation have done for the producer. I am pleased to know that the Government approve of this motion, and, with the assistance of this House, no doubt something will be available in the near future which will be for the benefit of the worker.

Question (*Mr. Bebbington's motion*) put and passed.

#### ADMINISTRATION OF SOLDIER SETTLEMENTS.

##### PROPOSED APPOINTMENT OF ROYAL COMMISSION.

Mr. KERR (*Enoggera*), in moving—

"That in view of the financial considerations connected with soldier settlements, and in view of maladministration generally, and in the interests of the State, and the settlers themselves, and for other reasons, it is the opinion of this Parliament that a Royal Commission should be appointed forthwith, with full power of investigation,"

said: Last session a number of members on this side of the House very definitely asked the Secretary for Public Lands, who is in charge of the soldier settlements, whether

he would appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into them, but to all the [5.30 p.m.] requests he gave a negative answer. Members on this side are completely in touch with soldier settlement, and they know from the cases brought before them that the Department of Public Lands is not giving the men a fair "go." What I mean by that I shall explain during the course of my remarks. I have another viewpoint on this question, that which has to do with finance, not so far as it concerns the men themselves, but so far as it concerns the State; and I want to go into figures to show the amount of money that has been borrowed by the State, on which the people pay interest by means of taxation, and to show also the very small result indeed that we are getting from the investment of such a large amount of money. We must realise that in soldier settlement there was a wonderful opportunity for this State to carry out a great work. That opportunity was never taken. We have to realise that the amount of money spent on soldier settlement is the largest sum spent on any object of loan expenditure, with the exception of the Railway Department. That is a fairly large thing to say, and it must cause a stir of interest in every politician.

The PREMIER: I think you are wrong.

Mr. KERR: No. In 1920-1921, £984,630 of loan money was spent.

The PREMIER: That is only one year.

Mr. KERR: That is 23 per cent. of the total loan expenditure for the year of £4,251,248. The Railway Department, one of the largest undertakings of the State, is the only thing that is of greater consideration than soldier settlement in this respect.

The PREMIER: What about local authorities and the Metropolitan and Ipswich Water and Sewerage Board?

Mr. KERR: They cannot possibly come into this category, and, moreover, the Premier's suggestion is not right. They have not received so much loan money as soldier settlements.

The PREMIER: They have not received it from the Treasury, but they have spent more loan money. Money has been borrowed from the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. KERR: Queensland borrowed over £4,000,000 of loan money last year.

The PREMIER: The Queensland Government.

Mr. KERR: Have it your own way. I give you that in. I say that of the purposes on which loan money amounting to £4,000,000 was spent soldier settlement stands second. With that year I have quoted and the three previous years, we reach the enormous sum of £2,192,052. We find that the State is paying in interest for that money, say, at 5 per cent., £100,000 per annum. I am going to quote how much we have received in interest for that £2,000,000 odd, all of which should have been paid by others, and I think I shall be able to show that the interest that we have actually received may run into hundreds instead of hundreds of thousands.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Do you argue that we should screw the soldier down and make him pay more?

Mr. KERR: That is only a catch cry. I am going to show, if I have the time, that

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this Government, even from Mr. Hunter's time, used the returned soldier for propaganda purposes.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: If the Minister will put wrong meanings on my words, he must expect such remarks from me. It has been said that a good deal of this money has been expended in the way of charity. Practically every penny that the soldier has got has been loan money, on which he has to pay interest and redemption. There is no question of charity; it is purely a business proposition. The soldier on the land does not want charity. He wants to be on a business footing, but he wants it to be on a basis on which he has some hopeful prospects. It may be assumed that that £2,000,000 odd has been spent on the returned soldier. That is quite erroneous.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: On whom has it been spent?

Mr. KERR: £385,000 of it has been spent in the resumption of freehold land, in spite of the fact that the Government have 400,000,000 acres of Crown lands.

Mr. WEIR: Put another "nought" on to it.

Mr. KERR: If the hon. member had his way, there would not be such a thing as a soldier, and probably no such thing as Great Britain—that is, if one may interpret his interjection and his previous attitude in that connection. It seems not to be credible for a moment that, when the Government have alienated only about 4 per cent., or 17,000,000 acres of Crown land, they should burden the returned soldier with the interest on repurchased freehold land. The land is leased to the soldiers at a rent based by the Government on the interest they pay on the money they borrow from the Commonwealth. Surely, of the unalienated 96 per cent. of the land there is sufficient close to railways to settle soldiers without the necessity of making them pay rent or interest on the purchase value. But that is one thing that is round their necks for a start. The result has been that that interest has had to be borne by the revenue of the State. It has been capitalised, and year after year has been added to those men's debits. What chance they have of paying it back I do not know. The Secretary for Public Lands does not know. It is time a Royal Commission found out.

Mr. PEASE: What about a Royal Commission to inquire into the Canungra business?

Mr. KERR: The hon. gentleman cannot sidetrack me. I have had to wait from the day of the opening of Parliament to talk about this, and I am not going to be sidetracked on to Canungra or anything else.

Mr. PEASE: Your party were responsible for it.

Mr. KERR: Queensland is the only State where there are such hard and fast conditions. Leasehold tenure is a lifelong tenure. I admit that after the first five years a soldier can transfer to another soldier. We know perfectly well that closer settlement has never been a success so far as leasehold is concerned. Look at the examples which are provided by the other States. Victoria, with only double our population, has 58.47 per cent. of the land alienated, and there are 5,000,000 acres under cultivation. Tasmania,

with one-third of our population, has four times our acreage under cultivation, for the reason that 40 per cent. of the land is alienated, and there is an incentive to own your own block. Whether that principle is right or wrong I do not know; but I do know that the incentive to work is there. That principle should be applied to the soldiers, when they have a certain amount of improvements. They ought not to have a lifelong tenure; they should be given the opportunity of selling the land and making a few pounds. When you put a man on a piece of land and say to him, "No matter what you do, you have to stay there," it is no wonder that hundreds of men are leaving the land. It is a wrong system. The average price of the repurchased land is £3 14s. per acre. The rent demanded, and which should have been paid, for the twelve months ended 31st March, 1922, was £2,970 8s. 6d. To show that these men are not making a success of their venture, £490 19s. 1d., or 16 per cent. of the total, was received. There was capitalised a sum of £109 8s., on which next year they will have to pay interest, which is an additional burden. There is outstanding a sum of £2,307. Eight-four per cent. of the rent due is unpaid to-day! The interest on the capital expenditure of this £385,000, at 5 per cent., amounts to £19,250. Because of maladministration and lack of encouragement to these men, the consolidated revenue has had to meet £18,760—or 97 per cent.—of that £19,250. It is not right that every loss should be made up out of consolidated revenue. If the railways paid to-day, we would not have to extract over £3,000,000 in taxation out of the people of the State. Exactly the same thing applies to the soldier settlements. There is an explanation for the non-receipt of the money. There is a definite amount of £8,000 in interest which should be coming in from blocks which are unoccupied. That sum has to be met by the taxpayers of the State. I do not think hon. members opposite realise that these things are happening. There are 299 blocks of repurchased land which are unoccupied; and, in addition, there are 133 blocks which were occupied but have since been forfeited. That demonstrates the impossibility of fulfilling the conditions which have been laid down. The Secretary for Public Lands asked me where some of the money has gone. A further sum of £200,000 has been expended on railways that would have been built for other settlers from money otherwise raised.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: You do not think they wanted railways?

Mr. KERR: I have not said so. The Minister is not logical. If the Government put the men there, certainly the railways should be built. My argument is that those men should have been placed on first-class lands—not heavily timbered or third-class lands, as has been the case. Can the Minister tell me that there is no suitable land out of the 400,000,000 acres which are not alienated? Take the Amiens line, which cost £58,396. The total loss on that line has been £4,082. There again the taxpayer has to pay something which he should not be called upon to pay. The Beerburum settlement was established in a district where a railway had long been in existence. That should be done in connection with all immigration proposals. Money should not be expended on the building of the Burnett

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railway line. What the Beerburum settlement has meant to the North Coast line I will proceed to show. There is only one thing to do, and that is to put the population on the side of the railway. The Beerburum settlement proves that. Prior to the establishment of that settlement in 1916, the goods outward at the railway station amounted to £86, whereas in 1921 the value was £1,015, or an increase of £929. In 1916 the goods inward amounted to £459, whereas in 1921 they were valued at £3,760, or an increase of £3,301. If we could get that increase in traffic in six out of seven railway stations in Queensland, the railways would be run at a very low cost, and they would be able to pay their way. Our railways are losing over £1,700,000 a year, which the taxpayer will have to pay, but that portion of the railway is paying its way because of the increased settlement. I am very sorry that I have had to devote so much time to replying to the interjection by the Secretary for Public Lands, but, if his other interjections stand the light of day no better than this one, he has no case at all. The sum of £142,000 has been spent from revenue in the construction of State farms. Where are those farms? They are wiped out, because they were an utter failure. I will take the Stanthorpe soldier settlement, where I have been several times. Are the settlers here getting their fruit trees from the State farms? Are the settlers at Beerburum getting their pineapple suckers from the State farms? What £142,000 a year means to this State will be of interest to hon. members opposite. It would have saved 560 public servants at least £250 each in deflation. This amount of money would also have saved the 5 per cent. reduction in salaries of 10,000 public servants. Yet the £142,000 has gone up in the air. We have asked in this House time and again for a Royal Commission to inquire into the soldier settlements, and it has been declined. I think that soldier settlers are the best settlers that Australia can produce.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KERR: A New Zealand lady, a frequent writer to the Sydney "Bulletin," who has often come in contact with the Australian soldiers, speaking of them, says—

"Nowhere in the world is there a higher standard of general education among the people or a lower standard of crime than in Australia. There is practically nobody in Australia who cannot read and write. The overseas men generally have been better housed and better fed than the men of Europe; and they are better men."

It does not seem possible to most people that a poultry farmer can lose 800 "chicks" out of 1,000. That has been the case, not only in one instance, but practically with every settler. When the progress association from a district in my electorate asked for an independent inquiry into this loss, they were threatened with proceedings. However, the inquiry was held by five independent poultry experts, who subsequently waited on the Secretary for Public Lands, who received them sympathetically, but nothing has yet been done in connection with the matter. Why cannot the right thing be done, and why should not a Royal Commis-

sion be appointed? I know that the Secretary for Public Lands is sympathetic in connection with these matters. If there is anything to be found out by a Royal Commission, then it should be appointed to satisfy the people of Queensland. The people of Queensland are not satisfied with the way the money is being expended, and are not satisfied that conditions are as they should be. One Minister of the Crown made a statement to the effect that a grant of £697 was sufficient to settle a man in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: Who says that?

Mr. KERR: The Secretary for Agriculture.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: No; the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth said that.

Mr. KERR: I was on the platform with the Secretary for Agriculture in Albert Square when he made the statement and accepted kudos for the fact that £697 was sufficient to settle a man in Queensland. I have the cutting from the newspaper containing the report. I have received information from Secretaries for Lands in other States, and such letters indicate by comparison the deplorable conditions which exist in Queensland.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC LANDS: What do they know about Queensland?

Mr. KERR: They know this much—that in New South Wales they were prepared to advance a man £2,500; in Victoria £1,473; in Tasmania, £2,271; in South Australia, £1,410; and in Western Australia, £1,375. The whole of the trouble in Queensland is that the men are not given a chance. The settlement in my electorate to-day could be made a payable proposition if the Government would only do the right thing. They could have done the right thing two and a-half years ago. If, instead of the number of poultry being 150 to 200, the Government would increase it to 800 or 900, that would give the settlers a start, which is all they want. If, instead of keeping loan money down and not giving the settlers sufficient, the Government would grant another £100 to each settler, I guarantee that 99 per cent. of the men would make the settlement a paying proposition. I will show the House how hard up some of the settlers are. A man, wife, and family have to live on 10s. a week. I have here a letter written on the brown paper of a 4-lb. paper bag, signed by the writer, which I received the other day. I regret that my time has expired, because the other matters mentioned in the motion should be brought forward.

At 7 p.m. the House, in accordance with Sessional Order, proceeded with Government business.

#### ESTIMATES IN CHIEF, 1922-1923.

The SPEAKER reported the receipt of a message from His Excellency the Governor forwarding the Estimates of Probable Ways and Means and Expenditure for the year ending 30th June, 1923.

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

Hon. W. Bertram.]

## TREASURER'S FINANCIAL TABLES.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*) laid on the table the tables relating to the Treasurer's Financial Statement for 1922-1923.

Ordered to be printed.

## SUPPLY.

## OPENING OF COMMITTEE—FINANCIAL STATEMENT.

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move—  
“That you do now leave the chair.”

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair, I would like to make a few observations in respect to the position that has arisen in Parliament. It is one of the privileges of the Opposition on this occasion to ventilate their grievances.

The TREASURER: What grievances can you have? (Laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: Before my time and that of other hon. members on this side is finished, the hon. gentleman will realise some of them. We were told earlier in the session, when an innovation in the procedure of this House was brought in—when hon. members were deprived of the right to speak on the Address in Reply—that it was unnecessary because there were other occasions when every hon. member in the House would have an opportunity of speaking, one of those occasions cited by the Premier being on the motion to go into Committee of Supply. That position has arisen, and it is for us to realise how far that statement of the hon. gentleman is going to be realised—whether every member of this Chamber will have that privilege allowed to him or denied to him. Some of us may have the opportunity of speaking, but I venture to say that many of us will be deprived of it once more.

The TREASURER: You are threatening obstruction.

Mr. VOWLES: I am not threatening any obstruction. I am simply standing up for the privileges and rights of the Opposition.

The TREASURER: You have seventeen days on the Estimates.

Mr. VOWLES: We are very often deprived of the right of discussing an Estimate. It has been the practice of the Government in the past scientifically to evade criticism, more particularly in respect of their State enterprises.

The TREASURER: That does not prevent you from discussing them.

Mr. VOWLES: It does prevent us from discussing them, except on occasions such as this. I would like to point out that we have reached rather an extraordinary position, because we have a Government representing a minority carrying on the affairs of the country.

The TREASURER: We have a majority.

Mr. VOWLES: You have not; you have a minority of the people in the country. The Government are carrying on affairs of the country merely by virtue of the votes of the officers of the House. You, Mr. Speaker, and the Chairman of Committees take it in turn—one when the Committee is sitting, and the other when the House is sitting—to vote consistently from the chair on every measure that passes the Chamber. Legislation is

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carried and alterations in existing laws are made merely by the sweet will of yourself and the Chairman of Committees.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The sweet will of the majority of the constituencies.

Mr. VOWLES: It is not so. The officers of the House are supposed to be impartial officers. The rule is laid down in “May” as to what the duties of those officers are under circumstances such as these.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: They are laid down in our Standing Orders.

Mr. VOWLES: “May” says (page 330, 12th edition)—

“If the numbers in a division are equal, the Speaker, who otherwise does not vote, must give the casting vote. In the performance of this duty, he is at liberty to vote like any other member, according to his conscience, without assigning a reason; but, in order to avoid the least imputation upon his impartiality, it is usual for him, when practicable, to vote in such a manner as not to make the decision of the House final, and to explain his reasons, which are entered on the journal.”

Is that practice being carried out in this House to-day?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

Mr. VOWLES: Are we carrying on in a constitutional way? If we are not carrying on in a constitutional way as we should do—

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member cannot criticise the action of the Speaker unless on a substantive motion.

Mr. VOWLES: I am criticising the procedure, and I submit that I have every right to speak of it as unconstitutional, and also as unprecedented.

Mr. FERRICKS: Why, the Cook Government carried on for sixteen months on the casting vote of the Speaker!

The TREASURER: The Kidston Government carried on on the casting vote of Mr. Speaker Armstrong.

Mr. VOWLES: “May” further says—

“The principle which guides a Speaker in giving his casting vote was thus explained by Mr. Speaker Addington. . . that upon all occasions when the question was for or against giving to any measure a further opportunity of discussion, he should always vote for the further discussion, more especially when it had advanced so far as a third reading; and that, when the question turned upon the measure itself—for instance, that a Bill do or do not pass—he should then vote for or against it, according to his best judgment of its merits, assigning the reasons on which such judgment would be founded.”

It then goes on—and it is full of statements of the same kind—to state that the same practice obtains so far as the Chairman of Committees is concerned. I say that we are carrying on in a most extraordinary way here, and one which is unprecedented, because the authorities I have quoted are right against it; and, under the circumstances, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether it is a reasonable thing that we, without offering any opposition, should be a party



to granting Supply to a Government which represents a minority of the electors of the State?

Mr. STOPFORD: We have a right to know what the Supply is.

Mr. VOWLES: We know that the Supply which has been granted in the past is Supply which is being used up to this very date. We know that that money has been utilised in various directions. We have asked for information as to its expenditure, but we have been denied honest and decent replies. We have had occasion here to ask for information. I can refer you now to the pages of "Votes and Proceedings." On page 74 you will see that I asked a question, and also on page 47 I asked for fair information on behalf of the Opposition in respect to matters where large sums of money are involved. What did we get in reply? Our questions are converted into a joke, and, as a rule, the person asking the question receives an insult. That should not be permitted in this House. We cannot get fair and honest replies to our questions. We can put what construction we like on the actions of Ministers who will stand up in their places and deceive us by not giving us facts. There is one Minister whose department is frequently under review—that is, the Minister in charge of State stations. We have tried to get information from him, but without success. It is like trying to draw a tooth from him. When I see him side-stepping the questions that we put to him, it reminds me of a character in a book which I read quite recently, who is described as performing the paradoxical feat of lying while he stands. (Laughter.) That is a department where huge sums of money are being lost. It is a department which no audit is able to fathom, because the department is in the position that it can give what numbers of stock it likes, and put its own values on them, and it is impossible to arrive at the true position.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are lying whether you are sitting or standing.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman has just wakened up. I charge this Government with political duplicity. I charge them with being a Government of broken promises. They are a Government who have got on the Treasury benches on false representations! The Government have made statements in the past which they have never acted up to. Those statements were very recent, if any hon. member likes to follow some of them up. In regard to some of the statements made by the Government, and their misrepresentations, we were told the following by Mr. McCosker, the Labour candidate for Toowong, as far back as 1920—

"We have every proof that if the Tory party gets possession of the Treasury benches, notwithstanding the protests of Mr. Barnes and his henchmen in regard thereto, the policy of drastic retrenchment, which seems to be a feature of Tory Government's financing, will again be applied."

Then Mr. Fihelly said—

"Finance meant to anti-labourites nothing more than cutting off the salaries of civil servants."

Again during the recent Paddington election, Mr. Jones, the Government candidate, the present Secretary for Mines, said—

"The railway deficit could also be met

by reducing wages, by cutting down the number of lengthsmen employed, as was done by Labour's predecessors when they had a little financial trouble. Despite its troubles, the Labour Government had not cut down the worker's wages. He was not a great believer in the wage system at all. He believed the people were evolving from the wage system to a system of true co-operation. While the wage system was in operation, he was not going to advocate any reduction of wages."

Then again, Mr. Fihelly, speaking at Paddington, said—

"The Labour Government was the only bar to Barwellism and black and cheap labour, lower wages, and all that goes with such a policy."

Mr. Jones also said—

"Australian industries could not be carried on unless cost of production was reduced. The capitalist thought this meant a reduction of wages. That was not so.

... The Government did not reduce wages or introduce a poll tax. Compare what had happened under other Governments."

Although they frequently refer to the poll tax, here you have this Government ruled by unions which live on a poll tax, because they compel every working man to pay his dues to the union before he has a right to work. After all the recriminations against the Governments of the past, and after all their criticisms of the late Sir Robert Philp, and his colleagues, here we find them, under better conditions than obtained in the time I referred to, doing what? Going back on the promises they made on the hustings only so far back as March last—these men who would not reduce the workers' wages! Is it any wonder that we have the "Daily Standard" and other Labour newspapers stating that the Government are playing the fool with the workers, and are out to beguile the producers to gain their votes? We find the "Railway Advocate" on 10th February, 1922, saying—

"Probably never before in the history of Queensland Railways have employees been compelled to suffer such injustices and hardships as are being experienced at the present time under the camouflage of a system called 'pooling of available work.'"

And on the 10th January of this year we find the same paper saying—

"When questioned at the meeting about his Government sacking the rank and file and at the same time giving the different heads of departments increases of £100, he (Mr. Pollock, the hon. member for Gregory) quibbled and made an oration about one thing and another, finally placing all the blame on the Classification Board."

Mr. STOPFORD: Now tell us what the "Advocate" has said about the Opposition? (Government laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: That is what they have said about the people whom they are supposed to represent officially in the Press. When we find the official organs of the Government, such as the "Standard," the "Worker," and the "Railway Advocate" telling the Treasurer and his colleagues sitting on the front Treasury benches that they no longer represent the people who put

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them into those positions, is it not a fair thing for us, when we have the opportunity given to us, to mention these things?

Mr. STOFFORD: Tell us what the "Courier" said about you. (Government laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: There are only two constitutional lawyers in Queensland—the hon. member for Mount Morgan and the editor of the "Courier." (Laughter.) I would also like to remind hon. members that not only have this Government altered their attitude in the matters to which I have referred, but they also have altered their objective since they were elected by the people—or I might have said that their objective has been altered for them, because, as is well known, they are not free agents. They have to do what they are told; their course of action is altered from time to time by certain irresponsible persons who do not represent the electors, but who arrogate to themselves prerogatives higher than those of Parliament itself. This Government came into office as the advocates of cheap food, as the advocates of the nationalisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. That objective was quite recently altered for them by a Convention sitting in Brisbane to the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange. We have had the spectacle during the last few weeks of the Treasurer dangling promises before the primary producer, and trying to make him believe that he is his friend, or is going to be his friend, whilst at the same time many of his following played the same game to the industrialists. We find this impossible position—one section of the Government promising to get for the producer the highest price for his produce and another section promising to give that very produce to the consumer for the lowest price. How can you reconcile the two positions? That is where the conflict has come. They are being found out. The workers of Queensland have been rather slow to realise it, but they have now reached the stage when they have been used and abused quite long enough, and the time is almost ripe for them to rise and demand that the Government retire from the position they are occupying. The unions at the Trades Hall have passed resolutions to that effect, and the Labour organisations are demanding that the Government do the correct thing—get out and give the people an opportunity again of deciding who is to occupy the Treasury benches.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: I started out by saying that there is an attempt being made to deceive two sections of the community whose interests to a very great extent are opposed one to the other—the people who want the highest price for their produce, and the people who want their food for the least possible amount of money. The very gentleman who proclaims that he is the saviour of Queensland—the Secretary for Agriculture—only quite recently made a public statement in which he said that the Labour people must not lose sight of their objective, which is, he said, that "production must be for use and not for profit."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is consistent so far as that is concerned. But I would like to know from the Government

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and from him how he is going to give the producer a reasonable return for his cost of producing and at the same time produce only for use and not for profit.

Mr. COLLINS: You do not understand.

Mr. VOWLES: No; and I would not expect anyone else to understand such a proposition as that. The Premier himself does not understand, and nobody else does. The position is a very serious one. I have here a report of the doings of that convention and the resolutions which were agreed to. First of all it says—

"For the purpose of achieving the objective, constitutional methods and industrial and parliamentary action shall be employed."

Mr. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: That word "constitutional" was put into the resolution at the instance of the Premier; but it since has been taken out by a convention which sat in New South Wales.

The TREASURER: That has no jurisdiction in Queensland. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman played a very bold game, because he thought that the people of Australia would be too wise to fall in with these extreme views and be a party to resolutions and principles such as these. For the time being it looked as though he had backed a winner; but to the horror and disgust of the hon. gentleman and many of his following, he is now placed in the position that, since those resolutions have been reaffirmed, he and his following have to subscribe to the platform which contains those principles, or they will not receive the endorsement of the Labour organisations. We are told—

"All parliamentary representatives, and all trade union officials, are required to function as active propagandists of the objective and methods of the movement."

I would like to know where the Government come in. Since these resolutions have been reaffirmed, are they occupying the Treasury benches honestly, or are they once more occupying them by false pretences to those people who were a party to those resolutions and to the individuals they represent?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: Those are some of the matters which, in the first place, I want to bring before this Chamber. There are many matters which require consideration before money is handed out broadcast to a Government whose aim is to get control of that money and then get into a hollow log. Things have happened here recently. They happened during the last session of Parliament too. The Government did not know where they stood from day to day. Their members are becoming disgruntled; at times there is almost open revolution. We have seen open revolution here. We have heard them speak against the actions of the Government, no doubt for their own personal purposes, for the purpose of having it printed in "Hansard," so that they can quote it at election time. When that crack in the party came along they had an opportunity of doing something effective, but then the party whip cracked, and once more they were brought into line. They were afraid to go to the full extent and assert their manliness, and

they had to do what they were told. Even now the time is arriving when there are hon. gentlemen sitting behind the Treasurer who are not prepared to allow things to go on as they have been going on recently and allow important legislation to be carried in the way it is being carried—not by the House, but day after day by the officers of the House by means of their casting votes.

When dealing with money there are many ways in which retrenchment or curtailment might be indulged in by the Government. They have always steered wide of the word "retrenchment" in the past, and they have called it "deflation," but now they call it by its proper name of "retrenchment." The Government admit that it is necessary to reduce either the number of their employees or the wages and remuneration they pay to those employees.

The TREASURER: What do you think about it?

Mr. VOWLES: I will tell the hon. gentleman what I think about it.

Mr. STOFFORD: You thought there were too many men in the railways a few years ago.

Mr. VOWLES: I think so still, and I will give figures to prove it. There has been a stuffing of the Government service in the past, and that is what has brought about the serious financial position that we find the Government in at the present time.

Mr. POLLOCK: What is your remedy?

Mr. VOWLES: My remedy is to carry on the affairs of the Government on business lines, the same as you would any ordinary business. The Government are for the time being the trustees of certain public moneys, and it is their duty to carry on the business of the country in an honest, businesslike way, and try and show a profit if they can. The Government departments were never intended to be a dumping ground for political friends of the party in power.

The TREASURER: They were in your time.

Mr. VOWLES: In 1901 there were 11,900 employees in the public service, who were paid £1,643,000.

Mr. COLLINS: All underpaid.

Mr. VOWLES: In 1922 there are 35,000, who are paid £6,950,000. In South Australia in 1901 there were 10,366 Government employees; in 1922 there are 14,200, showing an increase of 23,000 in number in Queensland, whereas in South Australia it was only necessary to raise their previous number by 4,000.

Mr. COLLINS: An unprogressive State.

Mr. VOWLES: No. The government is carried on in South Australia in a businesslike way, and not for the purposes of party or giving friends, and in many cases relations, good, sweet jobs. Since 1901 the population in Queensland has increased by approximately 50 per cent., whereas the number of Government employees has increased by 200 per cent. Of course, that includes the State stations. In South Australia during the same period the number of Government employees increased by only 36 per cent.

The TREASURER: Quote the Commonwealth figures.

Mr. VOWLES: Last year the salaries and wages paid to Government employees in

Queensland were only £250,000 less than the total revenue received by the Denham Government during the last year they were in office.

The TREASURER: How much would you reduce it by?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. gentleman is doing the reducing, and he reduced them 5 per cent. after stating that he would never reduce the workers' wages.

Mr. KIRWAN: You are only annoyed because they were not reduced more.

Mr. VOWLES: Not only is it a question of stuffing the public service with unnecessary men, but it is a question of demoralising the men who are put there. I always contend that, if you put on three men to do two men's work, you are doing an injustice to three men, and you are wasting capital which can never be regained.

The TREASURER: Do you say the figures show it?

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know whether the figures show it. The Government have been retrenching men irrespective of what their responsibilities are, irrespective of anything except their political creed. In 1915 the Railway Department employed 12,500 permanent and temporary employees, and the train miles run totalled 11,350,000. Last year the staff had grown to 16,700 in number, while the train mileage had decreased to 10,450,000.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Quote the corresponding period under the Tory Government.

Mr. VOWLES: Here is the position we find on these figures: It took 3,800 more men to run the trains about 900,000 miles less.

The TREASURER: What would you do?

Mr. VOWLES: I would have sufficient men to run the trains, and I would not stuff it with my political friends.

The TREASURER: Would you cut out 3,000 men in the Railway Department?

Mr. VOWLES: I would not put 3,000 unnecessary men into the department, and I would not have been charged with having done it for my own personal purposes at the expense of somebody else's pocket, because every penny paid to these men in salary has to be found by somebody else. If it was necessary to give these men employment, the amount of money paid to them could have been used in employing men on work which would have been reproductive, or, at any rate, be of a permanent nature. On the question of wasted money in the past—we are dealing with cash to-night—

The TREASURER: We are not dealing with cash yet.

Mr. VOWLES: We shall be at a later stage, if the hon. gentleman will allow us to get that far.

Mr. STOFFORD: You admit we still control the House?

Mr. VOWLES: You do not control it; the Speaker controls it. While we may be charged with delaying this motion to-night, with hitting at the public service in that they will be denied their ordinary payments, let me tell the hon. gentleman that their payments are not due until next week, so that no remarks coming from the Opposition

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to-night will do any injustice to them. They must be paid whatever happens. The Government know that, and it is not the payment of the public service that they are worrying about; it is about getting credit for another six months; and, having got that money, they will be quite satisfied to retire into recess, and go to sleep again until such time as it suits them to hold an election.

The TREASURER: We will put our sessional programme through; don't forget that.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: I venture to say that they will not put their sessional programme through. We have always found that, when the Premier tells you he is going to do anything, it is wise to go and bet on the other thing, because he is not going to do it. (Laughter.) In the first place, there are huge sums of money required from year to year for the purpose of paying interest on our public debt. I have asked questions designedly in this House in order to find out how much waste capital there is tied up, first of all in a certain work that was done in the Toowoomba railway yards prior to last election. I understand that something like £37,000 was spent there in order to put sufficient workmen into the district to get the hon. member for Toowoomba back into this House. That was three years ago, and there has been no interest earned on the £37,000, in addition to depreciation and loss on the work, because it is being washed away and damaged through want of attention. That is charged up against general revenue on interest account. Look at the Mundubberra line! Look at the earthworks on the Proston line! How long have those works been completed, and what was the cost?

Mr. STOPFORD: Who started them?

Mr. VOWLES: I know who finished them, and I know who took the rails from the district and put them elsewhere. Look at the work that was done on the Tara extension towards Surat. Look at the work done on the Mount Edwards-Munbilla line! All the capital lying dead—lying dead for the last six years, in many cases, and then they wonder why it is necessary to levy the taxation they find necessary to-day—why they have such a large interest bill! I urge on the Government that they have a duty to perform, and, if they will insist on spending capital, they must bring the work to a paying point, where they will get some return from it. If it is only  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. interest, and the railway, or whatever the work may be, is paying the cost of keeping it in repair, at any rate you have the finished article there as an asset, and you have some return, where we are losing both ways to-day.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: Two of the lines you mention are under construction now.

Mr. VOWLES: Since when?

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: For some months.

Mr. VOWLES: A lot of things have happened in the last couple of months. The Government have been under reconstruction during the last couple of months, too. (Laughter.) They are prepared to do a little bit of railway work here and a little bit of work there; in fact, they are tumbling over themselves to do work. But there are some departments not so active as others,

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and one of the departments you cannot get to do any work is the Electoral Department, more particularly if you want to take names off the roll. (Government laughter.) I venture to say this—and I challenge the Premier on it—that instructions have gone forth to the Electoral Department that the Chief Electoral Registrar is not to exercise the powers which are given to him under the Elections Act; he is being deprived of his right under that Act to clean up the rolls. When you find a Government in their last dying days carrying on as this Government are doing—using their departments to try and get back by false representations, or by false returns—then I say it is our duty in this House to speak publicly on it, and let the people know what they are up against. Another way in which money is being wasted is in connection with Government doles which are being given out to men in many cases who will not work. It is not the function of the Government to keep men who refuse to work. The Government are up against a hard proposition when that man happens to be a married man with responsibilities; but where you find, as you do find—I have seen them—single men who have been offered work and who have refused to accept it, then the time has arrived when you should put a stop to the rations.

Mr. COLLINS: What about Tory Great Britain, where they have 1,500,000 unemployed?

Mr. VOWLES: There are many other ways in which money is being squandered, and one way is in the direction of the State enterprises. I have not the time at my disposal to-night to go fully into that matter, but the Government, through the Treasurer, have told the people that they realise that the State enterprises have been a failure. The hon. gentleman stated that publicly, and I ask why, in the face of that statement, the Government are carrying on those enterprises, and why they are perpetuating the mistakes of the past? Just look at the amount of money that has been sunk in our State stations alone! It is recognised on all sides that you will be on the right side in saying that you could safely write off half a million of money as far as that one enterprise is concerned. Look at our fish shops! Look at our Warra Coal Mine! That cost about £47,000, and the assets realised about £5,000. Even if you put it at £7,000, there is a loss of about £40,000.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: That is not true.

Mr. VOWLES: We have asked the hon. gentleman, or at least his predecessor, about portions of that plant, but we have never got the truth. We know the plant was taken away, and we know where it was being used. We know certain negotiations went on between the Government and a company in respect of portions of that plant. Someone had an inspection made of portion of that plant, but was unable to find what the business side of it was, and what money was being paid for it.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: The whole of the plant is being used at Styx River. Lindsay did not get one penny.

Mr. VOWLES: Lindsay got a big sum in my own electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: No.

Mr. VOWLES: It is in my own electorate.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Not one scrap of it. They did not stand up to the agreement.

Mr. VOWLES: You say they did not stand up to the agreement, but they had the plant, though.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: They did not. You ask a question about it to-morrow.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Aubigny asked a question before, and the information was refused.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: He did not ask me.

Mr. VOWLES: There is another way in which I say that money could be saved, and that is in connection with the fetish of the Government that they must have their work done by day labour. Look at the huge sums of money that the Works Department has from time to time been spending on Government buildings. Look at the amount of money which we shall be asked to pass in various departments during the next few days. When we get to the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction I shall be able to show correspondence from my own electorate. I have one case to-day where the parents actually erected the school themselves at a cost of £100 and a teacher was given them; but now the teacher is taken away and the Government are taking away the school which was erected by these people and having it put somewhere else.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: How many children are there in the school now?

Mr. VOWLES: Nine. I will give the hon. gentleman the papers to-morrow—I have them in my room now. These people erected the school at their own cost, but the Government are taking it somewhere else, and I venture to say that by the time it is removed and re-erected under the day-labour system in vogue to-day on the site on which it is to be put, it is going to cost the £100 which it originally took to build it.

Mr. TAYLOR (*Windsor*): There is one way of settling the present trouble which the Government are in, if they were only courageous enough to take that method—that is, at the earliest possible moment to go to the electors and see what they have to say about the condition of affairs which exists at the present time. I contend that no self-respecting Government would continue in office under the conditions which prevail at present in this Parliament. We find that we are having brought forward legislation which is detrimental to the best interests of the majority of the people of Queensland.

Mr. COLLINS: Especially the Tramway Bill. That is the nigger in the wood pile with you.

Mr. TAYLOR: I intended to refer to the Tramway Bill, but, as the hon. member for Bowen has interjected, I would like to say a few words on it now. If ever there has been anything in Queensland which has been bungled and mismanaged by a Government, it has been the affairs of the Brisbane Tramways Company. For nearly two years the thing has been hung up. Throughout the whole of the metropolitan area people have been wanting extensions of the existing system, but nothing has been done. When the Government first brought in their Bill, in which they stated their intention of acquiring the trams, I believe they intended to acquire them; but, when they commenced to go into the matter, they found that it was a proposition which was absolutely beyond them. They could not

manage the trams or do anything at all; and, after a long period of waiting, and after having various reports prepared by independent men in connection with the matter, they thought "It is no good to us. We have made such a holy mess of all the enterprises we have taken on that we will now try if we cannot shoulder the trams on to the local authorities, and perhaps get out of it in that way."

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is now anticipating discussion which will take place on a Bill which is not yet before the House.

Mr. TAYLOR: I probably would not have got on to that matter just now, but one of the Government members asked for it, and he has got it. If ever there was a Government celebrated for its broken pledges and promises, that Government is sitting on the Treasury benches to-day.

The TREASURER: You have not challenged us this session.

Mr. TAYLOR: Before and since the last election, the Government continually told us there would be no retrenchment. The Premier introduced what he called "deflation," which, as I said before, meant letting the wind out of something. It was a very nice thing to tell those men who have been deflated that the Government were simply letting the wind out of them when they were being deprived of their means of livelihood. In 1902-3 the then Government were found fault with for the retrenchment policy which they introduced—a retrenchment policy which was justified by the circumstances which then existed. Queensland was then passing through an extraordinary depression—industries throughout the State were suffering on account of the drought—and the Government found it necessary to retrench the salaries of public servants. But what a difference there was in comparison with the position to-day. The present Government cannot complain of a falling revenue. They have had bounding revenues ever since they came into possession of the Treasury benches. If ever there was a Government which had an opportunity of making good and of redeeming their promises, it is the present Government. They had every opportunity to make good and redeem their promises to the people; but we find that those promises, instead of being redeemed, have been broken in every direction. The expenditure has bounded up, and gone in directions where the Government had no business to spend it. Various State enterprises were entered upon by the Government for which there was no justification whatever. What has been the result? We have not merely lost tens of thousands of pounds, but hundreds of thousands. The taxpayers of Queensland have had to make up the immense deficiency which has been created by the inefficient management of the finances of the State by the Government, and no one knows it better than the Treasurer. The Government have exploited the people in every possible direction to get the last farthing out of their pockets, until they find they have drained the sources of taxation absolutely dry. They now propose to come down on those who are least able to bear it—the men whom they are supposed to champion and stand up for. We find they are coming on these individuals at the present time, and are going to retrench them. That is the position which they have created

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themselves. It has not been created by members on this side of the House, but by the Government, through the methods they have adopted in carrying on the affairs of Queensland. Take, for instance, the mining industry. I am very pleased to see the Secretary for Mines over there.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: You are not more pleased than I am. (Laughter.)

Mr. TAYLOR: He has been the most expensive Secretary for Mines that Queensland has ever had. If he is going to remain there much longer, I do not know about ruination, but there will be a few more thousand pounds lost while he occupies that office. The Government were not satisfied with losing tens and hundreds of thousands of pounds in North Queensland, but they must go and spend another £40,000 in a further doubtful proposition, knowing as they do the condition of the metal industry throughout the world to-day. Any man who knows anything about the position of the metal industry must know that, so far as the copper industry is concerned, it will be many years before that industry will re-establish itself. We all know what happened a short time ago at the Washington Conference, when they decided to stop the building of warships. We know that a large amount of copper was used in the construction of battleships in the past, and the Washington Conference decided to stop it, and that meant that there would be a lesser consumption of copper. We also know that the use of copper is being curtailed in the manufacture of many articles to-day, and that other metals are taking its place.

The SECRETARY FOR MINES: Tell us where the Government are engaged in copper mining at the present time.

Mr. TAYLOR: I am pleased if the Government have shut down on copper mining, and I hope it will be a long time before they take it up again, because of all the propositions in which the money of the people should be invested I say that mining should be the last. It is a gamble from start to finish. However, as this is a gambling Government, it does not matter. (Opposition laughter.) Mining is one of the greatest gambles that can be taken up by any person or Government, yet the Government go right on and continue to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds and continue to lose more money.

Mr. POLLOCK: It is not as big a gamble as those labels.

Mr. TAYLOR: I would not like to put a label on the hon. member. (Laughter.) We on this side have been accused at various times of being a "low-wage" party, but on the other side we have the "no-wage at all" Government. It is not a matter of low wage but of no wage with them. There are thousands of people in Queensland to-day who are suffering on account of the policy of the present Government.

Mr. COLLINS: Where are they?

Mr. TAYLOR: The leader of the Opposition referred to the doles.

Mr. STOPFORD: Are you against them?

Mr. TAYLOR: If there was ever an expenditure of money that was not justified, it has been the dole money which this Government have expended. We quite realise that the widows and orphans have to be provided for, and I say that they have been

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provided for in the past equally as well as the present Government are providing for them. The Government are simply creating out of Queensland one huge philanthropic institution. That is all that is being done. People come along and ask for pensions, and they get doles that they do not deserve. The Government were satisfied, so long as the taxpayers were finding the money, to dole out this money in every possible direction, and in quarters where it should not be given.

Mr. HARTLEY: No one would ever accuse you of giving doles.

Mr. KERR: We give work instead.

Mr. TAYLOR: Another matter I would like to refer to is in connection with electric lighting. A number of districts in Queensland have been very anxious for a considerable time to have the advantage of electric lighting extended to their areas. They made applications to the Government for Orders in Council so that the City Electric Light Company could carry out the work, but the Government will not grant them. They think it is far better for men to walk about the streets doing nothing and the Government doling out money to them. If the City Electric Light Company were allowed, they would go on with this work in the metropolitan area, but the Government will not grant them the necessary Orders in Council. They call that carrying out the affairs of the country in the best interests of the people and for the good of the people. For years past the people in several parts of the metropolitan area have been trying to get the electric light installed. In some of the suburbs the people have got neither gas nor electric light, and, on account of the stubbornness of the Government, the City Electric Light Company are not allowed to install it. The Government are not in a position to do it themselves because they have not got the money, and, because they cannot render assistance themselves, they are determined that no one else shall carry out the work, and that everything shall remain stagnant so far as increased electric lighting is concerned. They prefer to pay out doles, just as they have been paying them out for some time now. That is one matter that has militated very much against the progress of the State. I may say here that the State of Queensland must go ahead notwithstanding what Government is in power. No matter what Government we have the State will not go back, and it will not stand still. We may have some difficulty in financing the State, but the assets are there all the time, and the State must go ahead. The legislation which has been introduced by the Government during recent years has tended to destroy the credit of the State in a way which does not reflect credit on the Government. Until that credit is restored we shall not have the progress which we desire. Just lately the Government introduced a Bill in order to stimulate what they are pleased to call primary production.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: All I have to say is that the primary producers, if I understand the position at all, have got to work out their own salvation free and independent of any Government.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. TAYLOR: In my judgment, the greatest muddlers in affairs of this kind are

Governments and Parliaments. I believe the primary producers, if they had obtained assistance from the Government in connection with their existing organisations to enable them to carry out and expand the activities which they are at present controlling, would have been able to do everything which the Government have sought to bring about in the Bill which we have been discussing recently, and the primary producers would have done it in a far better way themselves.

The railways have been referred to in the debate to-night, and I think it is only right that they should be introduced here. When we get the figures in a short time we shall find that during the period the present Government have controlled the affairs of this State the railway deficit has been somewhere about £8,000,000. The Premier has asked us what we suggest. It is not much use suggesting anything, because the Government do not accept our suggestions when they are given. The Government, however, have realised that the railways were overstaffed to the extent of 2,000 men, and they had to be got rid of. The Government were responsible for that. That represents about £500,000 a year. That is what the Government did. The Premier asked us what we would suggest. I suggest that the railways be freed from political control, so that they can be carried on in a sane, sensible, and businesslike manner. That £8,000,000 has to be made up by the taxpayers, and they will remember it against this Government. It is time we had a change of Government. It is time the Government got out of office. Let the Government go to the people, and let them take their record with them, and show the splendid results that they have achieved during the seven years and three months that they occupied the Treasury benches. The Treasurer at one time said that finance was the basis of good government. He wrote that in his pamphlet in 1915. I am sure that many a time since then he wished he had never written that. But we have a copy of

[8 p.m.] it, and we are going to perpetuate it. We are going to keep that pamphlet well before the people of Queensland, so that they may know what the Premier and his associates at that particular time had to say with regard to the finances of Queensland, and the way they should be managed. Immediately they got into power, they did exactly the opposite of what they had stated in the pamphlet ought to be done. In every possible way they acted quite contrary to their precepts, in order to prove how silly and foolish they had been when they wrote that pamphlet in 1915.

I am opposed to your leaving the chair, Mr. Speaker, because I think that the Government have had a very fair trial in this State. They have had every opportunity to make good. They have failed; and the sooner the Premier realises that he has lost the confidence not only of this Parliament but also of the people of Queensland, and gives the people of Queensland an opportunity of saying who shall carry on the affairs of the State, the better will it be for the State.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER (Hon. E. G. Theodore, *Chillagoe*), who was received with Government cheers, said: The hon. member who

has just sat down concluded his speech by intimating that the Government have lost the confidence of the House and of the country, and that, as a means of asserting that proposition, he was opposed to your leaving the chair. Therefore, I take it that the hon. member wants this to be a test question so far as the Assembly is concerned. (Opposition interjections.) I am putting it to the hon. member whether he wants this to be a test question. The leader of the Opposition and the leader of the Nationalist party have both spoken, evidently with a view to testing the question whether the Government possess the confidence of this House.

Mr. SZER: Of the country.

The TREASURER: If that is the desire, let me ask why it is that they do not test the confidence of the House in the Government. Why is it that they do not challenge the Government? They are saying all the time that the Government have lost the confidence of the House.

Mr. VOWLES: I will give you notice to-morrow.

The TREASURER: Of a want of confidence motion?

Mr. VOWLES: Yes.

The TREASURER: Does the hon. member intend to say that he will give notice of a want of confidence motion to-morrow?

Mr. VOWLES: If you ask for it, yes.

The TREASURER: That is what I want to get.

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: Well, you have got it. (Laughter.)

The TREASURER: Rumours have been going about that the hon. member intended to do that, but he has kept it a very close secret, and now I have extracted it from him.

Mr. VOWLES: You asked for it this afternoon.

The TREASURER: I did.

Mr. VOWLES: And I asked you whether you did not think you deserved it.

The TREASURER: And what did I tell the hon. member? (Government laughter.) I told him that we would meet his challenge at any time, quite confident that we could defeat it. What the hon. member has just forecast is another evidence of the desire of the Opposition to block business, and the debate on this motion before the Chamber is still further evidence of that desire. What does the hon. member accomplish by a long debate on the motion that the Speaker do now leave the chair? No business whatever. Neither he nor his followers say anything that could not be said immediately after the Financial Statement has been delivered. All they do is to try to postpone and obstruct business—(Opposition dissent)—prevent the Financial Statement from being delivered, and hinder the circulation of the Estimates.

Mr. FLETCHER: You won't give us a chance.

The TREASURER: If the procedure provided for on the agenda paper to-day had been carried out, the Estimates would have been in the hands of hon. members, the Financial Statement would have been read, and we could have proceeded with business. But hon. members opposite adopt these tactics

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to prevent the Government from going on with the sessional programme. The hon. member spoke just now about what he called the desire of the Government to get the Estimates through and then scuttle into recess. I want to assure him that the Government are not only going to put through the Estimates and the Supply which is necessary to carry on for a reasonable time, but they are also going on with the sessional programme. (Government cheers.)

An OPPOSITION MEMBER: The Speaker has got a good job.

The TREASURER: And so far as I know—

Mr. VOWLES: You don't know about what is going on.

The TREASURER: Has the hon. member got some scheme going on of which the House is not aware? (Interruption.) I know that the Opposition are not assisting in any sense towards the prosecution of public business. They are using all the means at their disposal to block public business; they are resorting to every device they can conceive of to prevent the Government from carrying a reasonable programme in the interests of the people. They are, as I said last week, showing no sense of chivalry, nor do they display any desire or ability to carry out the rules of the game. Since the House adjourned last week, I have received an urgent telegram from the Prime Minister of the Commonwealth asking me to provide that the Government shall be represented at a conference to be called in Melbourne at 2.30 o'clock next Monday afternoon to consider the question of a fruit pool and better means for marketing the fruit produced in Australia. The Prime Minister stressed the importance and the urgency of this question, and asked the Queensland Government to participate in the conference by allowing the Secretary for Agriculture to be there, accompanied by the proper officers and others interested. I read that telegram to the leader of the Opposition over the telephone, and asked him if he would arrange a "pair" for the Minister, or, if possible, arrange that some member on the other side who represents a fruit district might accompany him, and I received this letter in reply—

"Sir,—In reply to your telephone communication of yesterday, when you informed me that the Prime Minister had fixed 14th instant for a conference at which the Secretary for Agriculture and Stock was invited to be present, and asked me to arrange for a 'pair' for him during his absence from the House, I regret to have to inform you that I cannot accede to your request. The members of the party have decided that 'pairs' are not to be granted under any consideration."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: Quite right.

The TREASURER: That is the kind of attitude one would expect from a party who are opposed, not only to the Government, but also to the best interests of the State itself. (Opposition dissent.)

Mr. VOWLES: Send your Under Secretary.

The TREASURER: Some little time ago the hon. member giped at me as the leader of the Labour party for being under some kind of domination, some kind of tyranny,

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and at the members of this party for being subject to some kind of cast-iron discipline or coercion.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: So you are.

The TREASURER: He suggested that that discipline prevented us from being free agents. Let me inform the House that a few minutes ago one of the members opposite, desiring to leave the House for an hour, came and asked for a "pair" from this side and it was readily given, but he subsequently came back and said that he was not permitted to go. (Government laughter.) That is the kind of tyranny and restriction on individual liberty to which members opposite are subject. (Government laughter and interruption.)

The leader of the Opposition referred to his old parrot cry of alleged inefficiency in the Railway Department, and he indicated that his policy would be to get rid of what he considered to be 2,000 or 3,000 excess men in the personnel.

Mr. VOWLES interjected.

The TREASURER: Now the hon. member is trying to sidestep. He quoted figures which led him to use the argument that the railways were overstaffed. He said that there were three men in the Government service doing two men's work.

Mr. VOWLES: I did not.

The TREASURER: The hon. member will not stand up to it.

Mr. VOWLES: Those figures are up to 1921. Remember that!

Mr. HARTLEY: Don't screw out of it.

The TREASURER: The hon. member quoted figures regarding the number of men employed in the Railway Department during a ten-year period, showing a present-day increase of nearly 4,000—which, he went on to infer, was an excess number of men in the Railway Department. If that was not the argument, there was nothing in it. The hon. member apparently was arguing that there was an excess of 2,000 to 3,000 men in the Railway Department as the result of political appointments made by this party.

Mr. VOWLES: I said there were. I do not say there are now, because you have deflated them. (Government laughter.)

The TREASURER: Let me ask the hon. member, if that is so, what is the point of bringing it up now? I am not going to allow the hon. member to run away from his arguments or statements. He used the argument that there was an excess, and that the Government were responsible for inefficiency in the Railway Department. Let me quote from last year's report of the Commissioner for Railways, where he deals with this argument, because of the fact that the assertion was made repeatedly on the Opposition side last year and the year before. On page 12 of his last annual report the Commissioner says—

"As is well known, the financial position of the railways is governed by the amount of net revenue which can be earned towards defraying the annual charge for interest on capital. Net revenue, in turn, is affected by the amount of revenue earned and the cost of earning it. In a land of distances, as Queensland is, with no inland waterways, charges must be kept as low as possible



in order to assist development. Rates and fares have certainly been increased during the past few years, but not to the extent that they have advanced in other States. On the other hand, railway expenditure is increasing because of increased cost of wages, fuel, and stores. Commencing in 1917, the successive awards of the Arbitration Court have increased the salaries and wages chargeable against revenue by nearly £1,500,000 per annum, while coal awards have increased the average cost of coal by 7s. 0½d. per ton during the same period; on last year's issues this amounted to approximately £150,000, but since 1914-15 the cost of coal has doubled. As will be seen from the statement on page 11, stores and materials used in the working and maintaining of the railways have also increased, while the interest charge on open lines capital has increased by £311,174 during the last four years. All these matters, taken into consideration with the fact that the tonnage of the department's greatest source of revenue (goods and mineral traffic) reduced from 3,715,245 tons in 1917-18 to 3,445,315 tons in 1920-21, and live stock from 439,196 tons to 422,335 tons during the same period, and that our rates and fares have not increased in keeping with the expenditure, explain the present financial position of the railways.

"The fact that the percentage of expenses to earnings has increased from 62.67 per cent. to 95.63 per cent. in six years has no real value in determining whether efficiency has increased or decreased during this period in Queensland any more than it does in any other country.

"Comparing the year 1915-16 with 1920-21, it will be found that the miles of opened line increased by 15.8 per cent., but the number of employees by only 1.5 per cent."--

That is the argument which, apparently, the hon. member has been unable to appreciate, or he has not studied the report of the Commissioner. Otherwise he would not continue to make the wild statements he has been making. The paragraph proceeds--

"there being a decrease of 13 per cent. in the number of employees per mile of opened line. Although the fares were increased by approximately 17 per cent. and the general merchandise rates by approximately 19 per cent., the earnings per employee increased by 40 per cent. and the revenue per train mile was built up from 6s. 5½d. in 1915-16 to 9s. 10d. last year, equal to 51.7 per cent."

Mr. EDWARDS: By cutting out the trains.

The TREASURER: That is the way in which the hon. member sidesteps the argument when he is faced with the remarks of the Commissioner. The report goes on to say--

"By keeping in close touch with the volume of business moving, I have maintained the train mileage at the lowest possible figure. Notwithstanding there was a falling off of only 3.7 per cent. in tonnage, and the opening of 15.8 per cent. new railway necessitated a longer haul, the goods train mileage was reduced by 13 per cent. and the total mileage by 7.3

per cent. The result was that trains generally hauled greater loads, the average tonnage per goods-train mile having been built up by 10 per cent. and the average number of passengers per passenger-train mile by 9 per cent. In other words, every train hauled a bigger load and earned more revenue than five years ago, which is definite evidence of increased operating efficiency."

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: In spite of that, the railways lost £1,750,000 last year.

The TREASURER: Hon. members, especially those of the Country party, such as the recent acquisition who has just interjected--the hon. member for Oxley--ought to be thankful that the policy of this Government has kept down freights on the country lines. (Opposition laughter.) In order to support that statement, let me quote further from the Commissioner on page 13 of his report, where he says--

"It will be seen that the rates and fares in the other Australian States, and also in New Zealand and South Africa, have been increased a great deal more than in Queensland, and this has had the effect of showing considerably better results. Had the rates and fares in Queensland been similarly increased and our tonnage improved the same as on some of the other railways, the financial results of our operations for the twelve months would have shown to better advantage so far as the management is concerned and compared favourably with the results obtained elsewhere, but it has been the policy of the Government to keep rates and fares as low as possible, and the consequent loss has to be made up from consolidated revenue."

Mr. SLER interjected.

The TREASURER: The hon. member would argue against anything if he argues against that. Hon. members opposite, when they get an opportunity, are very careless in stating facts. Constantly they build up their case against the Government, such as their case is, upon false premises; they build up their case by innuendo, by false statement of facts, by misrepresentation and distortion. Only in that way can they make any case at all. Last year and the year before the leader of the Opposition, the hon. member for Bulimba, and others chided the Government for controlling the Auditor-General, as they said.

Hon. W. H. BARNES: I never made a comment with regard to the Auditor-General, and you know it.

The TREASURER: Well, then, the hon. member for Oxley. They misrepresented the case with regard to the Auditor-General's report. This is what the Auditor-General says in that regard on the very first page of his report for last year.

Mr. VOWLES: Did you not instruct him to write that? I knew a week before that that was appearing.

The TREASURER: The best answer to that shabby reflection upon the Auditor-General is contained in the Auditor-General's own remarks on the very first page of his report--

"Certain statements concerning myself, and the dates of presenting the annual

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report, having been made in the Legislative Assembly in the early part of the current session, I deem it my duty to allude to them here.

"The leader of the Country party (Mr. Vowles), speaking on the want of confidence motion on the 11th August, is reported to have said, vide 'Hansard,' page 52—

I venture to say that, if any one of the State enterprises in Queensland, with the exception of the Insurance Department, were reported on by an independent auditor who was permitted to compute the assets, and also the profits of those concerns, on the same lines as a commercial house makes up its returns, we would find every one making a loss.

And the hon. member for Oxley (Mr. Elphinstone), speaking on the same motion on 18th idem, is reported as follows, vide 'Hansard,' page 151:—

We have had an illustration in this House where the Auditor-General's report was deferred for some months pending the decision of a Federal election. We are told that the Auditor-General's report is presented to you, Mr. Speaker, and, without casting any insinuations, I have reason to believe that, if it serves the purpose of the Government, there will be an unfortunate printer's error or some cause or means for deferring that Auditor-General's report until the Government's case has been put before the people.

"In the first statement there is a direct inference that in the exercise of my functions I am not altogether independent. This is quite erroneous, and an implication of such a nature cannot be allowed to pass unchallenged. My independence is absolute. Since assuming office I have never been approached by any person with a request, or even a suggestion, as to what should, or should not, appear in the annual report.

"The accounts of the various departments, business undertakings, and State enterprises are examined by my officers without the slightest restraint, and in criticising the results of each financial year's operations I have had absolute freedom.

"Regarding the second statement, I would like to remind hon. members that for some years past it has been impracticable to complete the report before the close of September.

"The document has grown to such proportions, due to the expansion of departments, the increasing number of business undertakings, and the establishment of the various enterprises, that it is necessary to divide it into three parts—

1. General report covering the Treasurer's annual Statement;
2. State enterprises; and
3. Central sugar-mills.

"With a view to assisting hon. members, however, in dealing with the financial position of the State, the first named always receives priority.

"The assertion that there has been any avoidable delay in submitting the report, either in this office or by the Government Printer, is quite groundless."

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The hon. members who made these aspersions upon a gentleman occupying a high official position under the control of this House ought to feel their position very keenly, and ought to publicly apologise for the aspersions that they have cast upon that gentleman. The hon. member for Oxley laughs. He, apparently, will attack a man who cannot answer for himself except through the Government, and will cast aspersions upon him, and will even impute wrong motives to him, and then laugh when the mistake is pointed out to him. (Opposition interruption.)

The leader of the National party was unwise and ill-advised in being so pessimistic about the metalliferous mining industry. I do not know that he intended the statement he made to be taken up in the way in which he made it; but he stated that he hoped the Government would not be in a position for many years to operate the copper-mining industry. It will be very unfortunate for this State if the copper-mining industry lies dormant for many years, and I take it that the hon. gentleman did not intend to convey the wish that the mining industry would not be revived, because the mining industry has stood to Queensland in the past to the extent of making it a very valuable industry in the State. In years gone by, when the State was suffering from depression in the agricultural industry through drought or other adverse conditions, the mining industry has come to the assistance of Queensland, and has virtually been the salvation of the finances of this State on more than one occasion. (Hear, hear!) It is at present under a cloud; still, the mineral production of Queensland last year was over £3,000,000, and that it will recover I am sure will be the unanimous hope of hon. members. The Government, it is true, are directly interested in an enterprise at Chillagoe, and are not carrying on copper mining or copper smelting there at the present time. The copper properties are lying idle because of a depression in the market, but silver-lead mining and smelting is being carried on, and I believe will be carried on on a profitable basis. A suggestion has been made in a general way that this State is suffering from some kind of malign influence of Labour.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Communism.

The SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: We hear the parrot-cry of "Communism" from the hon. member for Oxley. The hon. member gets certain obsessions in his mind, and in order to manufacture some kind of a case, he keeps repeating the cry of "Communism" until it is a joke in this Chamber. One ought to ask one's friends during this festive week in Brisbane to come to Parliament House and hear the hon. member say "Communism." He is certain to say it if anyone comes here.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: You are committed to it.

Mr. RIORDAN: You were committed to the National party. (Government laughter.)

The SPEAKER: Order!

The TREASURER: Whatever description the hon. gentleman might choose to give the Labour party, its policy is well known, and is published and known to everybody; but the policy of the Country party is known to nobody, or is kept well in the background. I challenge any hon. member of the Country party to produce a printed platform of their

policy, showing the basis on which they stand. There is no such thing. I read the policy speech which the hon. member for Dalby delivered at Dalby, in which he advocated certain things that he has never dared to mention since. If the Labour party were responsible for all these great evils in this State that hon. members opposite keep talking about, then how is it that the country continues to prosper in the way it is doing? (Opposition laughter.) Is the country not prospering?

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: No.

The SPEAKER: Order! Order!

The TREASURER: What did the leader of the Nationalist party say just now? Did he not say it was prospering?

The SPEAKER: Order! If hon. members continue to refuse to obey my call to order, I will be reluctantly compelled to name some of them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: If the country is not prospering and the people have not the confidence in this country, how comes it that there were 70,000 people at the Brisbane Exhibition yesterday, all of them showing evidence of prosperity, and evidence of the greatness of the State in which we live?

Mr. KING: In spite of your legislation.

The TREASURER: If there is any impression that the future holds any dangers or that there is any menace, or that it is not as hopeful a proposition as one would like to expect, it is because of the slanders of hon. members opposite. If there is any depression, or if all is not right with Queensland, it is because of the sedulous propaganda to the injury of Queensland that is being fostered by hon. members opposite. Queensland will justify itself, and the Government will justify their policy, and we have no fear for the future of Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES (*Bulimba*): The Treasurer made reference to the fact that he believed there was no menace facing the people of Queensland to-day. What was his attitude quite recently, when he endeavoured to somersault so far as his policy is concerned? The hon. gentleman went to a meeting and said, "Let bygones be bygones! Let my past administration and legislation be forgotten in order that I may 'smooge,' not to the industrialists, but to the farming community!" The hon. gentleman deliberately made a request publicly in that way. He said, "Let bygones be bygones, and let the policy I have pursued, which has gone in the direction of assisting to wreck Queensland, be forgotten, and let us start afresh!" One would willingly allow that to be done if we believed that the repentance of the Treasurer was genuine; but you cannot attach importance to repentance when a man finds himself up against it and wants to find a way out. That has been the attitude of the hon. gentleman. Whilst the leader of the Nationalist party was speaking to-night the Treasurer by interjection made some reference to finance, and the interjection was right in a sense. He said that the Government had not always received a larger revenue in each year than the previous year. That is quite right in a sense.

The TREASURER: In a sense? It is so.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I will quote the exact figures. Here is a Government which

came into office and immediately clapped on taxation and increased that taxation to an alarming extent. I would draw the attention of the House to the fact that the Government received in 1921 in revenue nearly twice the amount that was received by the Government which they succeeded, and by themselves when they started the administration of the affairs of this State. I will give the figures dealing with the amount of revenue since 1915.

Mr. COLLINS: What are you quoting from?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am quoting from the Treasurer's returns. The hon. member is so dense that he does not know. The figures are—

Year.	Revenue.
	£
" 1915 ... ..	7,287,000
1916 ... ..	7,945,000
1917 ... ..	7,976,000
1918 ... ..	9,076,000
1919 ... ..	9,676,000
1920 ... ..	12,123,000
1921 ... ..	12,591,000"

We come now to 1922, and that is where the Treasurer tries to sidetrack the whole position. In 1922 the revenue was £12,311,378.

[8.30 p.m.]

Mr. COLLINS: The population increased by over 100,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: What is the position to-day? Queensland is the most heavily taxed of the States. A lot of the money that has come in has come in because there has been absolute repudiation. The Treasurer may claim to be the champion of repudiation—the absolute champion of repudiation—of tearing up scraps of paper as though they did not count one bit.

Mr. PAYNE: That is claptrap.

HON. W. H. BARNES: There it is again—"Let bygones be bygones."

Mr. PAYNE: It is claptrap.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It is not claptrap. The position to-day is that the industries of this State have suffered to an alarming extent as a result of the actions of the Government, and something more than that has happened. The Government have lost their good name, and the people of Queensland have lost their good name through the actions of the Government. Let there be no mistake in regard to the position when we raise these difficulties that have cropped up. The Treasurer knows that, driven as he has been in connection with finance, he has had to go to "Uncle Sam"—

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: There are some people who are so inconsistent that they will do anything they possibly can to sever a certain connection. The Treasurer, to try and save himself, went to America because he failed to get what he wanted in London. Why? Because of repudiation, and repudiation of the worst kind, and that is what has brought Queensland into the position in which it is to-day, and the hon. gentleman knows it. I want to draw attention to some of the utterances that have been made in regard to maturing loans by the Treasurer himself and those who have occupied the position of Treasurer since the Denham Government went out. There is sufficient on the financial side alone to say that you, Mr. Speaker, should not leave the chair until we

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know where we are going in that direction. Before I come to that, let me draw attention to another cause of a very great grievance to members of this House. The hon. gentleman has been challenged again and again by hon. members sitting on this side of the House to produce certain documents which would substantiate the statements he has made with regard to individual ex-Ministers, or, if he could not do that, to stand up like a man and say where he was; and every time he has sidetracked the position.

MR. WEIR: Like you did about Kidston.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Is it not a fact that we have tried again and again to get information as to the expenses of Ministers as compared to the expenses of Ministers in previous Governments? Year after year questions have been put, but no answers have been forthcoming. Only this week I wrote to the Auditor-General to see if I could get the information.

The TREASURER: You wrote to the Auditor-General?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I wrote to the Auditor-General, and I did not do it under cover at all. I am bringing it up in this House. On 7th August I wrote as follows:—

“The Auditor-General, Brisbane.

“Dear Sir,—I would appreciate it if you would kindly supply me with the following information:—

The amount of money drawn by me for expenses during the whole period that I filled the following offices—namely, Minister for Public Instruction, Minister for Works, Treasurer, and Acting Premier.”

The TREASURER: Why did you not write to me?

HON. W. H. BARNES: Write you, to be sidetracked again?

The TREASURER: A gross lack of courtesy on your part!

HON. W. H. BARNES: The lack of courtesy has been on the hon. gentleman's part. He has refused the information to the House.

The TREASURER: You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No, sir; when we fail to get from the Government of the country the information that we have a right to get, then we properly go to other spheres to try and get it. The letter continues—

“I would also appreciate it if you would kindly furnish me with the amounts drawn by Ministers who have filled the positions since my retirement from office and who have occupied the positions of Secretary for Public Instruction, Secretary for Public Works, and Treasurer, such periods to compass dates from June, 1915, to 30th June, 1922.”

The TREASURER: You said you took that information with you when you left office.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am seeking to get information as to the amount of money you spent.

The TREASURER: You go behind my back to get that? You ought to be ashamed of yourself.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The letter continues—

“I would add, in making this request,

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that I would prefer, if it were at all possible, to get the expenses of all the members of the Cabinet with whom I was associated during my period of office, and also the expenses of all Ministers who have occupied public positions since the resignation of the Denham Government.”

The TREASURER: That is a hot proposition.

HON. W. H. BARNES: It goes on—

“Repeatedly, efforts have been made in Parliament to get this information without success, and I am now appealing to you, as the Auditor-General, for the information which I am seeking.

“I might add that if successful in obtaining it, as I trust I shall be, I purpose using it, because it is a matter pertaining to public affairs, and it is on that ground that I am seeking the information.

“Thanking you in anticipation.

“Yours faithfully.”

The Auditor-General wrote me under date 7th August, and I challenge the hon. gentleman to-night to produce the information. He has been challenged again and again in this House in the past to furnish certain information, and he has refused to give it.

The TREASURER: Let us hear the Auditor-General's letter.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I challenge the hon. gentleman to-night to lay on the table of the House a return showing the expenses of all the Ministers, my own included, and the expenses of Ministers that have occupied office since I had to do with it.

The TREASURER: Let us hear the letter.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will hear the letter in due time and one which was written to his own office. The reply from the Auditor-General reads—

“Audit Office, Brisbane.

“7th August, 1922.

“Dear Sir,—Yours of even date to hand asking for certain information regarding Ministerial expenses.

“To obtain the details asked for would necessitate an inspector visiting the various departments and occupy considerable time.

“Information of this nature has never been furnished to an individual member, but if requested by Parliament to supply same I will take action accordingly.

“Hon. W. H. Barnes, M.L.A.,

“Messrs. Barnes and Co., Ltd.,

“Roma street, Brisbane.”

I am going to challenge the hon. gentleman to get that information.

The TREASURER: That is a very proper reply. If the hon. gentleman really desires to get that information, he might write me a letter on the subject.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am making the request to-night, and if the hon. gentleman says that if I write him he will furnish it, write him I will. Will the hon. gentleman furnish it?

The TREASURER: If the hon. member will write me a courteous letter on the subject I will consider it and furnish the information I think he ought to have. (Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to tell the hon. gentleman that I am not going to be fooled. I have been fooled too often by the hon. gentleman, and I am not going to be fooled again. I wrote to the Under Secretary to the Treasury Department on the 8th August, and I would like to say that so far I have not received a reply. A reply may have been sent, but I have not received it.

The TREASURER: The holiday intervened.

HON. W. H. BARNES: A good many holidays will intervene between now and the getting of this information. (Opposition laughter.)

The TREASURER: Don't you expect the information?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I expect some evasive reply.

The TREASURER: You expect an evasive reply?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The letter to the Under Secretary reads—

“8th August, 1922.

“The Under Secretary,  
“Treasury Department,  
“Brisbane.

“Dear Sir,—I would appreciate it if you would kindly supply me with the following information:—

The amount of money drawn by me for expenses during the whole period that I filled the following offices—namely, Minister for Public Instruction, Minister for Works, Treasurer, and Acting Premier.

I would also appreciate it if you would kindly furnish me with the amounts drawn by Ministers who have filled the positions since my retirement from office and who have occupied the positions of Secretary for Public Instruction, Secretary for Public Works, and Treasurer, such periods to compass dates from June, 1915, to 30th June, 1922.

I would add, in making this request, that I would prefer, if it were at all possible, to get the expenses of all the members of the Cabinet with whom I was associated during my period of office, and also the expenses of all Ministers who have occupied public positions since the resignation of the Denham Government.

I might add that, if successful in obtaining it, as I trust I shall be, I purpose using it, because it is a matter pertaining to public affairs, and it is on that ground that I am seeking the information.

“Thanking you in anticipation.

“Yours faithfully.”

I challenge the hon. gentleman again from my place here to-night to furnish the information we are seeking and which he refuses to give.

Mr. PAYNE: Who takes any notice of that?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. member on my left who is yapping away takes a great deal of notice. The electors of Queensland want to know this. Anyone would think that a Government who have been charged with all kinds of neglect would furnish the information in their own interest. I want to further draw attention to the fact,

which has already been touched on to-night, that the Government deliberately went to the country on the policy of “No retrenchment.” I can well remember when we went to the country that again and again on every hustings the cry was raised, “If you return the Country party or the National party in numbers sufficient to beat the Labour party, you are going to have retrenchment.” There is no question that a promise was made that retrenchment would not be carried out by the Government, but what happened? Of course it is given a very extraordinary name—“deflation.” It is not “retrenchment,” only “deflation;” but I do not know whether a person who is getting a reduced salary stops to consider very long what is meant by “deflation” or “retrenchment,” if he is minus the money. Not only has there been carried out along those lines a policy which has been a complete breach of confidence with the people, but in addition to that there has been piled upon the people an amount of expenditure which has been growing from year to year in connection with supplying the unemployed with food. Do not let the matter be misunderstood. If men cannot get work they should not be allowed to starve; but, when £174,000 is spent for one year, is there not something very wrong with the Government of the country who bring about that condition of things? The Government may say that they did not bring it about. We have revenue just about double what it was when the Government took office, when there was unemployment only to a very small extent, costing in relief something like £10,000 a year, but now it has grown to £174,000. Is there not something wrong with the conduct of the affairs of this great State? I want to say that, whilst the man who is worthy of help should be assisted, an employed man is very much better than an unemployed man; but the Government have brought unemployment in their wake. I do not think they care. I notice that the Minister for Justice—I would emphasise that—the Minister for Justice laughs. What does he care?

The SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must refer to the hon. gentleman by his official title—the Attorney-General.

HON. W. H. BARNES: The Attorney-General who administers justice, so-called, what does he care about the men and women who may be in want?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: You do not object to a man smiling?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I want to draw attention to another thing, which I say advisedly is a menace to Queensland—that is, the encouragement which hon. members opposite have given to gambling.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about gambling in foodstuffs?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Are you interested in the Coorparoo Racecourse?

HON. W. H. BARNES: I am not. The hon. gentleman is so used to touch things which he dare not mention to-night that he desires to associate my name with things of the same kind.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What do you mean?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman knows only too well what I mean. During the past year, I find that in the vicinity of Brisbane alone Government permission was granted for 432 art unions, 760

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raffles, and 77 combined art unions and raffles, concurrently with the running, under Government control, of a continuous succession of "Golden Casket" lotteries, together with 222 race meetings. I say that the Government have struck at the very foundation of the morality of the community. They will make a raid on some gambling hell, or some "two-up school." They will prosecute the smaller thing, but smile on the bigger thing, and countenance it. I say that under the guise of so-called helping charity, the Government have descended to do what no Government have ever done before in connection with Queensland—they have dragged it to the very dust. The Attorney-General is one who grants these permits. I hope that he is proud of what he has been doing! It is said sometimes that visitors from Melbourne have come and have encouraged this kind of thing. (Opposition laughter.)

I am sorry the Treasurer is not in his place, as there is another matter I want to refer to—that is the question of loans. What is the position to-day with regard to loans? The hon. gentleman must know that in 1924 about £12,000,000 of loan money will mature, and in 1926 about £11,000,000. I can well remember when loans of about £11,000,000 were maturing on a previous occasion how the present Treasurer and other hon. members then in office got up and drew attention to the fact that no provision was being made to meet those loans. What are the present Government doing in that particular regard? I will show the position. Quoting from "Hansard" for 1914, page 1406, the late Mr. T. J. Ryan is reported to have said—

"The other day I was in Nanango addressing a meeting, and I found when I was explaining certain portions of the Labour platform that those who had hitherto supported the Liberal party expressed surprise that there had been so much misrepresentation as to what our platform was. The matter I referred to was the land tax, because Liberal speakers always fail to point out that, although we are in favour of imposing a land tax, we are in favour at the same time of exempting from income tax incomes derived from land which is subject to that land tax."

Then, on page 1407, Mr. Ryan said—

"They were not making provision for maturing loans. The hon. gentleman does not know what he is talking about. (Laughter.) There is a great difference between making provision for loans falling due and raising money to carry on public works. Here were loans which were falling due on a fixed date and had to be met. The Government showed lack of judgment, lack of foresight, and want of business acumen in landing Queensland into the position in which she finds herself to-day in regard to this loan. Irrespective of the war, I heard the hon. member for Townsville from his place some time ago say that the Government should be taking steps to make provision for the meeting of these loans. Here we have had an expensive trip by the Premier to do something which could have been just as easily done by correspondence."

That was what was said at that time by the party opposite with regard to maturing loans.

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I draw the attention of this House to the fact that the Premier did go home at that time, and he came back again.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: There was no delegation then. (Laughter.)

HON. W. H. BARNES: No. The explanation is that since then the State has lost its good name. I do not know, Mr. Speaker, if you ever went to a bank; but, if a man wants an overdraft from a bank, character tells, and this Government went to the old country with a soiled character, and they were not able to get the money they were after. The Premier, Mr. Theodore, armed with full authority from this State, went home and came back. Why? Because a "scrap of paper" had not been honoured. The facts are well known.

The question of the land tax has been raised. In 1915 there was no State land tax, but this Government clapped it on.

MR. COLLINS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: That is quite in accordance with the hon. member for Bowen. There was no land tax in Queensland in 1915, and the direct taxation in that year was only £954,000. In 1921 the direct taxation amounted to £3,600,000, and last year it was nearly as much.

MR. COLLINS: Yes; we make the wealthy pay.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They are squeezing and squeezing all the time. They have failed to carry out their trust to their own people. I read in the paper where a worker was summoned in Bundaberg the other day because he failed to pay his labour dues of 10s.—or £1, as the case may be. They talk about a poll tax, but they poll-tax the workers in an infinitely worse form. That is what is happening to-day.

MR. PAYNE: You are very weak.

HON. W. H. BARNES: No; I am very strong. Why are these millions of pounds being raised? They are raised to bolster up a lot of the doctrines of hon. members opposite. We know what happened in New South Wales after the trouble in South Africa. News came from South Africa to the unions in New South Wales stating that they had failed, and the reply was sent back from New South Wales to the following effect, if not exactly in the same words:—"We are sorry you failed. We would have liked to carry out here what you were seeking to carry out in South Africa." That is what the money is being used for. We know that the present Government have stopped the automatic increases due to the public servants.

MR. KIRWAN: Your Government stopped the automatic increases, and we had to pay them.

HON. W. H. BARNES: We found the money for your Government to pay the automatic increases. We left the finances of the State in such a good condition that it would be a good thing if they were in the same position to-day.

MR. COLLINS: You only paid the railway men 6s. per day.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I hold in my hand a statement of the public balances which shows that on the 30th April, 1915, the amount in hand was £3,336,862. That is what we left when we went out of office.

The best asset we had in Queensland has gone since then. I refer to the State Savings Bank. It has disappeared from the State's control, although it was our best asset. Unfortunately, the Government got their trust funds into such a condition that they were glad to give the Commonwealth debentures for the amount, and let the Bank go. I am sorry I have not got time to refer to the Treasurer's tables to-night, but I can show the condition of the Savings Bank when the Denham Government went out of office. On the 30th April, 1912, the balance to the credit of 136,000 depositors in the Savings Bank was £6,916,000, and on the 30th April, 1915, there stood to the credit of 189,903 depositors the sum of £10,263,160, showing an increase in the number of depositors of 53,806 and an increase in the deposits of £3,346,222. What has happened since then? The Government got into difficulties, and we allowed the very best asset to go to tide the Government over a difficulty. That is what the people of Queensland had had to suffer as a result of this Government.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Our public debt also increased by £30,000,000 in the same time.

HON. W. H. BARNES: I was going to quote from a speech made by me as Treasurer in reference to the automatic increases when the Denham Government were in power. I have not got the exact quotation by me, but a promise was made by the Government that the automatic increases would be paid if finances permitted.

The TREASURER: We had to pay them when we came into power.

HON. W. H. BARNES: But we found you the money.

The TREASURER: Why didn't you pay the automatic increases yourself, if you had the money?

HON. W. H. BARNES: The hon. gentleman will get his answer from the Treasurer's Financial Statement for 1914-1915, wherein it was stated that, if the condition of the finances was satisfactory, the public servants would receive their automatic increases. But we were not allowed to have the opportunity of paying those automatic increases, because hon. gentlemen opposite promised the people cheap bread, cheap food, and all the rest of it, and they also raised the German question, on which the hon. gentleman and his supporters have always been authorities. We know that we

[9 p.m.] did not have the opportunity of carrying out that particular promise, but we found the money, which the hon. member was able to disburse. The following year there was a deficiency, and here I take the opportunity of saying that so far the hon. member has not made provision for a deficiency of about £500,000.

The TREASURER: Western Australia has a deficiency of £200,000.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They have against that a big sinking fund which more than covers their deficiency.

The TREASURER: Not sufficient to cover their accumulated deficits. You are wrong there.

HON. W. H. BARNES: They have a very big sinking fund. The hon. member will have an opportunity to contradict me. This Government, who are supposed to have great sympathy for the workers—I am going to quote now from the Treasurer's tables for 1921—

The TREASURER: If you will wait a few minutes I will give you later ones—those for 1922.

HON. W. H. BARNES: Sometimes the Treasurer has had the courtesy to furnish me with his tables in advance, but not on this occasion. In 1911-1912 the Works Department spent £152,379 on buildings, and in our last year of office £190,438. What have this Government done? This Government, who are supposed to be the friends of the workers, spent in 1920-21 £99,817. Notwithstanding the increased cost of work, they spent less money in that direction than our Government. They have allowed their money to go in doubtful enterprises, put it into fictitious things that have left them in a hole.

I am now in a position to quote what I said with reference to automatic increases in 1914—

“Hon. members in perusing the Estimates will notice that no increases are provided for any officers of the State; but whilst this is so, I am pleased to inform hon. members that no reductions have been made in salaries. (Hear, hear!) Before the war broke out it had been arranged that the usual automatic increases should be given, whilst all branches of the service would, in all probability, have obtained increases. In connection with the Railways and Education Departments, some considerable improvements in salary had been decided upon. The effect of the war on our finances made it imperative that the Government's intentions in this direction be abandoned; those interested will, therefore, have to wait a more favourable opportunity. I desire, however, to inform hon. members that, should circumstances warrant it, the claims of all officers concerned will be at once dealt with.”

And they were dealt with.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: My time has gone, but I say there is every justification for the debate which has taken place this evening. The Government have failed absolutely. Let me summarise. They have lost the confidence, first of all, of themselves. They have lost the confidence of the country. They have lost the confidence of the outside world.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. H. BARNES: They have failed to finance the affairs of Queensland. They have added debt upon debt. There is only one thing which any self-respecting Government would do in their position; but the Government have no self-respect. Has the Premier any self-respect? If they believe that the people of Queensland are still behind them, why not relieve you, Mr. Speaker, of so many unpleasant experiences? But no! They have not the courage. If they believe the people are behind them, why not go to their masters? They are afraid, and the duty of the Opposition as a whole is to put before the people the position. The longer the delay, the bigger the defeat. The writing is on the wall, and we know what the result will be. Let them accept my challenge, face their masters, and they will then come back in shreds and patches.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

*Hon. W. H. Barnes.]*

Mr. FLETCHER (*Port Curtis*): I propose to take this opportunity of dealing with the report of the Commissioner for Trade for the year ended 30th June, 1921, in the compilation of which the Government have been guilty of a grave misdemeanour, for which they are worthy of the severest condemnation and censure. I offer no apology for dealing with the affairs of a period that has gone by some twelve months, for this is the first opportunity we have had to deal with the matter. You will recollect that the report of the Commissioner was not circulated until after the House adjourned last year, and I say deliberately, and with the fullest sense of conviction, that this report was wilfully held back so as to prevent criticism, and in the hope that, with the lapse of time before this session, the incidents would be forgotten, and criticism would not be so severe as at the moment. But I, for one, do not propose to allow it to go by, because I consider that the whole compilation is an utter disgrace to the Government and the department. The report is most voluminous. In an array of words they hope to create an air of ingenuousness and confidence, neither of which exist.

The TREASURER: Why do you not deal with it during the debate on the Financial Statement?

Mr. FLETCHER: Because I want to deal with other questions then. The report is a mass of contradictions and inconsistencies, inaccuracies and plausible and specious statements. When one sees these contradictions one wonders how they could have arisen, and one imagines this report going backwards and forwards between the Government Printer and the department for alteration. One concludes that there were so many alterations that the people responsible at the finish forgot what was already in the report, and so allowed things to go in absolutely contradictory to what they had previously written in another place. It is difficult to deal with this matter in Parliamentary language; but, if I express it in this way, perhaps I shall be able to show what I think of it. The Government are in relation to the people of this State as the directors are to the shareholders of a public company, but no directors would have the hardihood and temerity to lay before their shareholders such a report as this, not even if they were the directors of a bogus company or the directors of a company who were trying to sell a salted mine to an unsuspecting and unwary public. That is what I think about this report, and I wish the Minister was here, so that he might hear what I have to say about it.

Before I deal with the report and balance-sheet generally, it is necessary, in order to get things in their proper perspective, to reiterate something I have said before. The State stations cost £1,400,000. That was the capital cost, but the whole outlay upon them has been £1,640,000. In buying these stations the Government had in mind the supplying of cheap meat for the people in the cities, yet they were purchased in such inaccessible parts, and at such fabulous prices, as to make it impossible for them to deliver meat to the people in the cities or to give it to them cheap if they could get it there. There is not the slightest doubt of that. When one considers that the members comprising the Cabinet at that time possessed some degree of mentality, one cannot understand the negligence or incompetence that could

[*Mr. Fletcher.*]

have permitted such blundering purchases. If they were not negligent or incompetent, one is justified in deducing the fact that there must have been some other motive that has not been disclosed.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. FLETCHER: It staggers the imagination to think of it. They could not have bought the stations in more inaccessible places, and they bought them at such prices as had never ruled before. They commanded the squatters' meat, placed embargoes on his stock, extracted retrospective rents from the pastoralists, and imposed the highest possible taxation. They called the pastoralists "beef barons," and harassed them at every point. Yet, at the same time, to a few extremely wealthy pastoralists they paid those fabulous prices. The only low price they paid was to a widow woman.

Mr. STOPFORD: You state that the stations are inaccessible; yet you say the men who were running them were wealthy pastoralists.

Mr. FLETCHER: The Premier has admitted that a blunder was made in buying those stations, and that there have been big losses.

The TREASURER: Did you not say there was a reduction of 120 per cent.? (Government laughter.)

Mr. FLETCHER: I will deal with that later. I do not wish to deal now with the question of whether there have been losses or not. I wish to deal with the humbug, hypocrisy, and deception disclosed by the balance-sheet and the report. In the profit and loss account there is a loss shown of £58,000. To reduce the loss to as low a figure as that, the Government included in the profit and loss account for that year £135,000 which stood to the credit of reserve. Fancy including reserves that had been accumulating in years gone by! That is bad enough; but it is infinitely worse when those reserves are false and faked—reserves that exist in the imagination only—reserves that are merely book entries which have nothing behind them to substantiate them. If you take the reserves into consideration, it brings the loss up to £194,000. The previous year, it will be recollected, I said that, in order to show an inflated profit, the values had been increased by 8s. 1d. per head. I pointed out that that was most irregular, and was absolutely improper bookkeeping. It increased the profit for that year by £75,000, and I condemned it absolutely. In his reply, the Minister defended the action which had been taken, and said it was quite all right. This year he comes along and reduces the value of the cattle by 9s. 4d. per head. He adopted and declared for this system. Now let us follow this through to its logical conclusion. In the first place, it is absolutely wrong to show a profit by increasing the values of stock on hand. Supposing the Minister had a soft-goods business in Mackay, and during his absence in Brisbane he left it in charge of a manager. The manager, by managing things very badly, makes a loss for the year; but, in order to wipe out that loss, he increases the value of the goods on the shelves, and by that means shows a profit. That is exactly what the Minister did last year.

The TREASURER: I beg to move—

"That the question be now put." (Disorder.)

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: The "gag!"



Question put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 35.	
Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones, A. J.
„ Brennan	„ Kirwan
„ Bulcock	„ Land
„ Collins	„ Larcombe
„ Conroy	„ Mullan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Payne
„ Cooper, W.	„ Pease
„ Coyne	„ Pollock
„ Dash	„ Riordan
„ Dunstan	„ Ryan
„ Ferricks	„ Smith
„ Foley	„ Stopford
„ Forde	„ Theodore
„ Gilday	„ Weir
„ Gillies	„ Wellington
„ Gledson	„ Wilson
„ Hartley	„ Winstanley
„ Huxham	

Tellers: Mr. Brennan and Mr. Pease.  
NOES, 34.

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

Tellers: Mr. Bell and Mr. Logan.

Resolved in the affirmative.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Question—That the Speaker do now leave the chair (*Mr. Theodore's motion*) put; and the House divided:—

AYES, 35.	
Mr. Barber	Mr. Jones, A. J.
„ Brennan	„ Kirwan
„ Bulcock	„ Land
„ Collins	„ Larcombe
„ Conroy	„ Mullan
„ Cooper, F. A.	„ Payne
„ Cooper, W.	„ Pease
„ Coyne	„ Pollock
„ Dash	„ Riordan
„ Dunstan	„ Ryan
„ Ferricks	„ Smith
„ Foley	„ Stopford
„ Forde	„ Theodore
„ Gilday	„ Weir
„ Gillies	„ Wellington
„ Gledson	„ Wilson
„ Hartley	„ Winstanley
„ Huxham	

Tellers: Mr. Forde and Mr. Weir.  
NOES, 34.

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

Tellers: Mr. Kerr and Mr. Sizer.

Resolved in the affirmative.

COMMITTEE.

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

The TREASURER: Mr. Kirwan,—In making his Financial Statement in September

last, the Treasurer estimated a deficit for the year 1921-1922 of £465,038, but, as a result of economies which the Government have effected throughout the service, the year closed with a deficit of £188,592 only. Revenue was less than the amount received in the previous year by £229,653, and the expenditure was less by £91,251.

The estimated and actual results were—

Revenue ... ..	£12,270,689	£12,311,378
Expenditure ... ..	£12,735,727	£12,499,970
Deficit ... ..	£465,038	£188,592
Revenue (over estimate, £40,689).		
Expenditure (under estimate, £235,757).		

REVENUE, 1921-1922.

Although there are some large discrepancies between the estimated and the actual receipts, the net result for the year showed the small increase of £40,689 over the estimate. I need scarcely point out to hon. members the difficulty of correctly estimating the receipts from some of the sources, such as taxation and other receipts. The revenue per capita was less than that for the previous year by £1 1s. 6d.

The following table gives the revenue under the main heads, and shows the increase or decrease as compared with the estimate:—

Head of Revenue.	Estimated.	Actual.	Increase.	Decrease.
Commonwealth	£ 950,689	£ 951,178	£ 489	
Taxation	3,227,960	3,420,296	192,796	
Land	1,498,600	1,515,535	17,035	
Mining	38,000	33,528		4,472
Railways	5,164,000	5,125,340		38,660
Other Receipts	1,392,000	1,265,501		126,499
Totals	12,270,689	12,311,378	210,320	169,631
Net Increase			£40,689	

Although receipts from taxation exceeded the estimate by £192,796, they were £262,346

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

below the amount received in the previous year. The excess of receipts beyond the estimate is all accounted for by income tax.

Land revenue was about £88,000 under the receipts of the previous year, and mining receipts £4,000 under.

The railway receipts must be considered satisfactory in view of the closure of the Mount Morgan works for about nine months of last financial year, the slump in the mining industry in the Northern Division of the State, and the depression in the meat business.

## EXPENDITURE, 1921-1922.

Notwithstanding that provision had to be made for an additional £416,000 to meet Sinking Fund payments in connection with the American loans and interest on the public debt, the expenditure was £91,000 less than in the previous year. This means that savings were effected in the services, other than payments on account of the public debt, to the extent of £507,000. The following table shows the expenditure of the various departments and the savings or excesses as compared with the parliamentary appropriations:—

	Appropriation.	Expend-d.	Saving.	Excess.
	£	£	£	£
Schedules ... ..	150,930	214,815		63,885
Interest on Public Debt ... ..	3,300,000	3,236,096	13,904	
Executive and Legislative ... ..	25,042	25,686		644
Chief Secretary ... ..	115,498	113,095	2,403	
Home Secretary ... ..	1,513,464	1,524,736		11,272
Public Works ... ..	205,411	190,073	15,338	
Justice ... ..	183,397	153,384	10,013	
Treasurer ... ..	419,012	373,592	45,420	
Public Lands ... ..	300,315	280,660	19,655	
Agriculture and Stock ... ..	133,823	126,640	7,183	
Public Instruction ... ..	1,303,857	1,295,607	8,250	
Mines ... ..	104,208	107,224		3,016
Railways ... ..	5,000,770	4,808,362	192,408	
Total ... ..	12,735,727	12,499,970	314,574	78,817
Net Saving ... ..		£235,757		£235,757

The table discloses that expenditure generally has been well controlled. The per capita expenditure on departmental and general services shows a decrease of £1 4s. 2d. compared with the previous year. The practice instituted in 1920-1921 of requiring departments to submit to the Premier and to the Treasury, every month, statements of the position of each parliamentary vote, was continued during the year just ended. That this action has enabled a very close supervision to be kept over all expenditure is borne out by the comparatively small amount of "unforeseen expenditure" from each fund during the year. The expenditure of this nature from revenue was mainly brought about by increased provision to meet unemployment, for epidemics, and for the purchase of foodstuffs for the starving children of Europe. The "unforeseen expenditure" in the Trust Funds was largely the result of financing the cotton crop (£90,000), for which provision could not be made when the Estimates were framed; and the increased activities of the State Insurance Office, which resulted in increased receipts.

Excluding schedules and interest on the public debt, which are voted by various special Acts, the appropriations from revenue totalled £9,284,797, whereas the expenditure, including "unforeseen," amounted to £8,999,059. The trust and special funds appropriations amounted to £4,740,117, and the expenditure totalled £4,238,282. There was appropriated from the Loan Fund £3,538,750 and expended during the year £2,599,573. Of the loan appropriations, railways were allotted £1,460,000, but expended only £1,168,489, inclusive of expenditure upon certain sections of the North Coast line and other railways, which were not provided for on the Estimates. I think the above figures show that any expenditure incurred in anticipation of Parliament's approval has been well covered by the saving on the Estimates-in-Chief.

[Hon. E. G. Theodore.]

Dealing seriatim with the various services provided for from Revenue Fund—

*Schedules.*—The increase beyond the estimated requirements was almost wholly brought by Sinking Fund payments amounting to £61,652 in connection with the two American loans. When the Treasurer presented his statement, no decision had been arrived at in respect to borrowing in America, consequently provision could not be made for the Sinking Fund contribution.

*Interest on the Public Debt.*—The expenditure was £13,900 less than estimated, and is the result of the repayment before its due date of the temporary loan of £1,000,000 obtained from the Bank of England.

*Executive and Legislative.*—The small excess under this heading is accounted for by an increase in the printing bill of Parliament.

*Chief Secretary's Department.*—The saving effected would have been greater by £10,000 had we not made available that sum for providing food for starving children in Europe.

*Home Secretary's Department.*—A considerable saving in many of the services is shown by this department.

*Department of Public Works.*—The savings are spread over the various services, the only excess, and that a small one, being in the vote for "Labour, Factories, and Workers' Accommodation."

*Department of Justice.*—This department showed a saving in all branches with the exception of friendly societies, where the excess was the small amount of £30.

*Department of the Treasurer.* shows the substantial saving of £45,000 as compared with the estimate. The greater portion of this saving was, however, due to the issue of the American dollar loans and subsequent conversion into pounds sterling, thus obviating the buying of exchange to meet large payments in London.

*Department of Public Lands.*—In no instance did this department exceed the appropriation, and a saving was effected on almost every vote.

*Department of Agriculture and Stock.*—The net saving would have been greater but for the fact that about £2,000 was expended upon the preliminary work of organising the agricultural industry, for which no provision was made on the estimate. No appropriation was exceeded during the year.

*Department of Public Instruction.*—Although a few of the appropriations proved insufficient, the net saving is comprised of many items.

*Department of Mines.*—This is one of the few departments to show a net excess over appropriations, and this result is accounted for by the extra assistance given to mining by loans for deep sinking, advances to gem miners at Rubyvale and Sapphire, and the purchase of coal-bearing land at Styx River.

*Department of Railways.*—The savings effected amounted to the satisfactory sum of £192,000. Mackay was the only railway to exceed the appropriation, but as a set-off against the excess expenditure of £4,900 on this line the revenue exceeded the estimate by over £46,000.

The Treasurer, when delivering his statement last September, made the following remarks:—“ . . . Economies are still being effected in all departments. A board is making searching inquiries into the workings of the railways, and has made recommendations which will result in substantial savings. The Public Service Commissioner also is having inspections made of the various departments other than railways. The savings which will result will not be apparent for some little time, as many of the retired employees are entitled to gratuities, in some instances amounting to six months' salary. In materials, too, we have very big commitments, and the economies effected will not appear immediately. . . . ”

The results of the Government's endeavours are reflected in the reduced expenditure of the various departments, and had it not been for the cessation of mining activities at Mount Morgan and in the Cloncurry district, and the depression in the cattle industry, it is highly probable that the increased revenue which would have been earned by the railways would have enabled us to balance our accounts for the year.

#### TRUST FUNDS.

The transactions of the various Trust and Special Funds are set out in Tables D and D6. With a few exceptions the funds are in a satisfactory financial position. In considering the position of these funds, it is necessary to bear in mind other things besides the cash receipts and disbursements for the year; for instance, the expenditure on the cotton crop was £90,498, whereas the receipts were £1,276 only, but the proceeds have yet to be brought to account and the Government recouped for these advances.

#### LOAN FUND.

As the Loan cash needed replenishing, it was necessary early in the financial year to issue a loan. Realising that our full requirements could not be met locally, it was decided in October last to accept a favourable offer of 12,000,000 dollars from a New York financial institution at a time when, owing to the rate of exchange prevailing, the position was very favourable to Queensland borrowing in the United States of America. As hon. members have already been ad-

vised, this loan was a dollar issue, and owing to the weakness of the pound sterling we reaped a big advantage in the conversion.

Although the nominal rate of interest was 7 per cent., after allowing for the profit made on the conversion into sterling, the rate of interest was less than that at which money could be obtained on the London market on the date the loan was raised. The issue was made at 99, the term of the loan being twenty years, and the rate of interest 7 per cent. The proceeds, exclusive of the profit on conversion, amounted to £2,441,430, and the profit on conversion into sterling was £523,713, making the gross proceeds £2,965,143. The expenses were £102,439, leaving the net proceeds £2,862,705. The result would have been still more favourable to the State but for the sudden and rapid improvement in the pound sterling, and the consequent decrease in the profit on the later conversion transactions. The rate of interest only, on the net proceeds, is £6 0s. 7d. per cent., but as the net realisation was £116 ls. 8d. per cent., the effective cost (including redemption) works out at £5 12s. 10d. per cent. The expenses were £3 9s. 1d. per cent. upon the amount realised. An additional profit of £5,625 was made in effecting the transfer of £500,000 of the loan to Queensland, as we sold the exchange at a premium of 22s. 6d. per cent.; this profit, however, has not been credited to the loan but to Consolidated Revenue. Further, we arranged with the Commonwealth Bank to accept this £500,000 as a fixed deposit for six months at 3½ per cent. per annum. So far no portion of the Sinking Fund has been used in redemption of the bonds, and, by arrangement with the Commonwealth Bank, these payments are placed upon fixed deposit with that bank at current rates. I think it will be generally admitted that the loan was a very satisfactory transaction for the State, and in view of its success the Government decided, in February last, to raise a further 10,000,000 dollars, which were offered by the same financial institution in New York. Like the first loan, this issue was subscribed in a few hours. It was a dollar loan at 6 per cent. interest, the price of issue being 96½, and the currency twenty-five years. As a Sinking Fund, 50,000 dollars are to be set aside each half-year during the currency of the loan for the purchase of bonds upon the open market at a price not exceeding par. Any portion of the Sinking Fund not expended during any half-year is to be invested, at the option of the Government, in bonds of the State of Queensland or Commonwealth of Australia without restriction as to price. The proceeds of this issue were £1,983,148, the profit on the conversion of the dollars into sterling £191,096, making the gross proceeds £2,174,244. The expenses will be approximately £85,703, or £3 18s. 10d. per cent. upon the gross proceeds. The net realisation was £2,088,541, or £101 12s. 7d. per cent. of the nominal issue, and the rate of interest £5 18s. 1d. [9.30 p.m.] per cent. However, as the net amount realised on this loan, like the previous issue in America, works out at a premium, the effective cost, after allowing for redemption, is reduced to £5 17s. 5d. per cent.

It should be noted that in arriving at the effective cost of these two loans the pound sterling has been assessed at par value.

In addition to getting cheap money Queensland has secured a splendid advertisement in the United States, and these loans will

*Hon. E. G. Theodore.]*

undoubtedly give the American people a much greater interest in us, and should lead to the opening of markets for some of our exports. (Opposition laughter.) Perhaps it might be well to remove at once the impression which seems to exist in some quarters that a condition of these loans was that portion of the money had to be expended in America. No such condition attached to these issues.

On 1st January, 1922, Treasury bills amounting to £1,124,750, which were originally issued to cover revenue deficits in the years 1900-1901, 1901-1902, and 1902-1903, became due, and, as provision had to be made to meet them, it was decided in October last to make a conversion offer to the holders of the bills. It should be remembered that at this date money was very dear and there were no indications of an immediate cheapening; consequently, the conversion rate now appears to be over-generous. The prospectus gave holders of the bills the right of converting into bonds or stock bearing 6½ per cent. interest and maturing on 31st January, 1936, and entitled them to a bonus of £2 for each £100 of maturing bills so converted. Holders of £755,600 accepted the conversion offer, £368,250 were redeemed by cash, and there are still unrepresented bills amounting to £900. Of the £755,600 converted, £411,850 were held by the Commonwealth Bank, and under the Savings Bank transfer agreement we exercised our right of renewing these bills for a further twenty years at the low rate of 4½ per cent. interest.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Further, the Commonwealth Bank did not participate in the bonus. I might mention that the "Digger Loan," which the Commonwealth raised in August-September, 1921, cost £7 5s. per cent., and this is the interest rate the State is now being charged for advances from that loan made to us by the Commonwealth for soldier settlement. The rates of interest charged to soldiers by the State are—during the first year, 3½ per cent.; second year, 4 per cent.; and for succeeding years it may be increased by 10s. per cent., but must not at any time exceed 5 per cent. It will, therefore, be apparent that for a portion of the money, for which the Commonwealth are charging £7 5s., less a rebate of £2 10s. for five years, the State receives £3 10s. in interest and bears all the losses. I merely mention this matter as some persons seem to be under the impression that the Commonwealth Government shoulder the entire financial responsibility of settling returned soldiers upon the land.

As a result of the loans raised in America, it was not necessary to take advantage of the extensions which the Bank of England was prepared to grant in connection with the repayment of the temporary loan of £1,000,000 obtained from that bank. The loan was, consequently, repaid in October last.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: The table hereunder gives, briefly, the transactions of the Loan Fund during the year, and shows a balance, at 30th June last, of £4,501,962.

		LOAN FUND.	£	£
Balance at 30th June, 1921	...	...	...	1,428,491
Receipts during the year—				
Loans from Commonwealth	...	...	630,976	
Net proceeds of sales of debentures and inscribed stock	...	...	838,253	
Net proceeds of conversion by general public of Treasury bills which matured 1st January, 1922	...	...	335,753	
Amount of debentures £9,900 and Treasury bills £411,850 held by the Commonwealth Bank of Australia which matured 1st July, 1921, and 1st January, 1922, respectively, converted into instalment stock under clause 6 of Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920	...	...	421,750	
Amount received from Commonwealth Bank of Australia under clause 10 of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920	...	...	908,000	
Instalment stock issued under clause 9 of the Commonwealth Bank Agreement Ratification and State Advances Act of 1920, transferred from Trust Funds	...	...	37,520	
Net proceeds of loan of \$12,000,000 floated in New York, October, 1921	...	...	2,362,705	
Net proceeds of loan of \$10,000,000 floated in New York, February, 1922	...	...	2,091,849	
Repayments by local authorities, soldier settlers, etc.	...	...	310,502	
Receipts under Land Sales Proceeds Act	...	...	7,414	
			8,444,722	
Expenditure during the year—				
Expenditure as per Budget Table E2	...	...	2,599,573	£9,873,213
Repayment of temporary loan from Bank of England	...	...	1,000,000	
Retirement of Treasury bills which matured 1st January, 1922	...	...	1,124,750	
Debentures redeemed 1st February, 1922	...	...	15,000	
Amount of war gratuity bonds received from soldiers paid to Commonwealth Government in reduction of soldier settlement loan indebtedness	...	...	4,451	
			4,743,774	
				£5,129,439
Deduct—				
Amount of adjustment between Trust and Loan Funds	...	...	...	691,812
				£4,437,627
Add—				
Cash balance at 30th June, 1922	...	...	...	£4,437,627
War gratuity bonds cashed on behalf of soldier employees	...	...	...	64,335
				£4,501,962

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The loan expenditure during the year totalled £2,599,573, as against £4,251,248 for the year 1920-21—a decrease of £1,651,675. Details of the transactions relating to the Loan Fund are set out in tables E to E6.

#### STATE ENTERPRISES.

It is impossible, at this early date, to furnish complete information in regard to the financial results of the enterprises for the year just ended, but every endeavour is being made to expedite the presentation to Parliament of the report of the Commissioner for Trade on the various activities.

#### LAND SETTLEMENT AND AGRICULTURE.

This State is on the threshold of very important developments in land settlement and extension of our agricultural industries.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: A vast quantity of land, suitable for almost every kind of agricultural production and capable of providing prosperous settlement for many thousands of additional farmers, is rapidly being made ready in various parts of the State. The most important of these areas are—

Northern Burnett and Callide Valley, approximately 3,000,000 acres.

Dawson River, approximately 120,000 acres irrigable and 1,000,000 acres non-irrigable land.

Palmerston area, near Innisfail, approximately 200,000 acres.

Capella and Clermont cotton-growing areas, 250,000 acres.

In addition to these areas there are rich sections of land in the vicinity of the North Coast Railway, between Mackay and Proserpine and between Ingham and Innisfail, which will be available at an early date when those sections of railway are completed. There is also an irrigation proposition of fine promise, embracing 10,000 acres of land, on the Condamine River near St. George.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: I don't see any reference to Inkerman.

The TREASURER: Recognising the necessity for obtaining the best advice available in respect to the proposed Dawson Valley irrigation and water conservation scheme, the Government have appointed Mr. A. F. Partridge to take charge of the work. Mr. Partridge has had an extensive experience in irrigation and conservation works in Egypt, America, and Australia. It is intended to introduce a Bill this session dealing comprehensively with irrigation and water conservation, and the Bill will include provision for the appointment of a Commissioner and the submitting of all proposed schemes to Parliament for approval.

With the object of increasing the area available for the cultivation of wheat, inspections are now being made by two officers in the Maranoa district, and in the neighbourhood of Inglewood and Goondiwindi. The inspection will cover Crown land, freehold land, and land held under pastoral and grazing tenure, and if it is found advisable action will be taken to resume such land as may be required and make it available for perpetual lease selection.

The awakening of new interest in the agricultural industries and problems will necessarily lead to much increased expenditure by

the Department of Agriculture. This, however, is regarded by the Government as expenditure of a highly productive nature and need excite no alarm. Without doubt, the State will benefit in immeasurable degree from the establishment of the Council of Agriculture and the local producers' associations, from the granting of a guaranteed price for cotton, and from the formation of the wheat pool, and all other such activities.

Already cotton-growing has been greatly stimulated in this State by the action of the Government in guaranteeing to the growers 5½d. per lb. for all seed cotton of approved quality grown by them. This guarantee was for three years ending 30th June, 1923. In order to still further encourage the planting of cotton, the Government have decided to extend the existing guarantee until 31st July, 1923—that is, by one month—to enable the cotton-growers to reap the advantage of the guaranteed price of 5½d. per lb. for the whole of the forthcoming crop, which ought to be harvested by the extended date. It is intended also to guarantee a price for a further period of three years ending 31st July, 1926. The conditions under the new guarantee will be different to those ruling at present, as the price will be based on the quality and length of staple of the cotton.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Payment by results. Do you notice that?

The TREASURER: The details have not yet been worked out, but for the first year of the new guarantee period the maximum price will be 5½d. per lb. for seed cotton of 1¼-inch staple, of good quality, and free from disease. In 1920 the Government entered into an agreement with the British Cotton Growers' Association—a body mainly comprising Lancashire cotton manufacturers—under which the association guaranteed for cotton grown in Queensland the price of 1s. 6d. per lb. of clean lint of good quality, c.i.f. Liverpool. The agreement was for five years, but the association's losses were limited to £10,000. The prices realised for Queensland cotton during 1921 were below the price guaranteed under the agreement, and it will, therefore, be necessary to draw upon the guarantee. Any balance of the £10,000 will be applicable to the 1922 crop, but any loss beyond the amount of the guarantee must be borne by the Queensland Government. The Government are also carrying a very considerable liability with respect to the new guarantee, of which I have already spoken, because any deficiency in realisation, after payment to the farmers of the guaranteed price, must be borne solely by the State. Telegraphic information published recently in the newspapers indicates that the Commonwealth Government are prepared to share with the State Government the risks involved in guaranteeing a price for raw cotton. I have telegraphed to the Prime Minister and asked for confirmation of this and for details of the proposal, but so far I have been unable to obtain particulars of the Commonwealth proposals.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: The same fate as in regard to Ministers' expenses.

The TREASURER: It does not look like a very favourable response from the Commonwealth at present. I have dealt with this subject at some length because cotton is bound to loom largely in the future of this State. From advices the Government have received from authoritative sources we

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have every confidence in advising Queensland farmers and settlers that a remunerative price for cotton will be assured, at any rate, for some years to come.

Through the good offices of the Empire Cotton Growing Corporation the Government have secured the services of an eminent expert in cotton culture, who will sail for Queensland at an early date.

The sugar industry has been a very valuable standby to this State during the depression in other industries; it is natural, therefore, that the Government should be anxious as to the future of the industry. The Government have exerted their best endeavours to induce the Commonwealth Government to extend the sugar agreement for a further period—so far, unavailingly. The economic importance of this industry to Australia is so great, and the consequences of its destruction would be so disastrous to the policy of white settlement in Northern Australia, that we are confident the Commonwealth Government will eventually approve of an extension of the agreement on satisfactory terms. Holding this belief, the Government have given consideration to the question of erecting additional sugar-mills in Queensland.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: There is sufficient milling power in Queensland at present to supply the needs of the Commonwealth in raw sugar if the full capacity of the existing mills could be utilised, but for reasons which are well known very few mills are supplied year in and year out with their full complement of cane. The average production of raw sugar is, therefore, over a given period of years, much under the normal consumption of the Commonwealth, and this consumption is increasing each year beyond the ratio of production. The Government deem it advisable, therefore, to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into and report upon the question of the number of new mills that should be erected and the most suitable locations.

#### STATE ADVANCES CORPORATION.

The loans granted for the financial year aggregated £514,747—namely, £262,283 to settlers, and £232,464 for workers' dwellings.

The rate of interest (5 per cent.) charged by the State has remained unchanged throughout the twenty years during which advances have been made, notwithstanding that the cost of loan money has very considerably increased during that time.

The extent to which the Corporation is called upon to make advances for releasing settlers' liabilities is not generally understood. It is safe to assert that, with the exception of the last two years, when advances have been directed more to increasing settlement and production, more than two-thirds of the advances have been for taking over settlers' liabilities to financial institutions and others.

Following a period in 1920-1921 of lesser activity in the erection of workers' dwellings owing to the excessive cost of building, operations have gradually increased during the past financial year, as the cost of building has receded to about 25 per cent. lower than at the period of highest costs about eighteen

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months ago. Applications are now being submitted at a rate approaching that of pre-war times.

It is proposed to amend the State Advances Act to widen the scope of that measure and liberalise the advances.

Mr. CORSER: We have heard that before, too.

The TREASURER:

#### ESTIMATES, 1922-1923.

In view of a decreased revenue and the necessity of making provision for certain unavoidable increases in expenditure, the greatest care has been exercised in the preparation of the Estimates for the current year.

#### REVENUE.

My estimate of the revenue is as follows:—

	£
Commonwealth ... ..	974,000
Taxation ... ..	3,203,000
Land ... ..	1,437,000
Mining ... ..	26,700
Railways ... ..	5,300,000
Other receipts ... ..	1,262,000
Total ... ..	£12,202,700

The total is £108,678 less than the amount received last year. The per capita payments from the Commonwealth show an increase of approximately £23,000 over the amount received in 1921-1922.

Compared with the previous year the anticipated receipts from taxation disclose a decrease of £217,296. Income tax is less by £194,361 and land tax by £30,513, and I do not think I can be charged with pessimism in respect to my estimate of receipts from these two sources.

Mr. MORGAN: Yet you say the country is prospering.

The TREASURER: Hon. members do not seem to realise that this estimate is based upon a period of taxation which has gone past. The hon. member for Port Curtis, last year, ridiculed the estimate that was made then for income tax, and said it would fall short of the estimated amount by at least half a million. He was proved to be woefully wrong.

Mr. FLETCHER: No; I said it would take two years to get it. The Treasurer did not give any figures for one year.

The TREASURER: It is generally recognised that persons engaged in the cattle business had a very much reduced income last year, but, fortunately for the pastoral industry, the price of wool kept very high, and should prove a means of assisting in maintaining the revenue derivable from this class of taxpayer. The decrease in land tax is accounted for by the relief given to farmers under the amending Act passed this session.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Ha! Ha! How much is that?

The TREASURER: I have heard the hon. member for Oxley indulging in many cackinnations to-night. I do not know what inspired them, unless it is the fact that he has been unable to overcome the effect of the festivities of the week. (Laughter.)

From land revenue I estimate receiving £73,535 less than last year, and of this sum pastoral holdings account for £54,659.

Mining receipts show a decrease of £6,828, owing to the operations of the State arsenic mine being treated as a trust account and the receipts credited to the Trust Fund.

It is anticipated, in view of the reopening of the Mount Morgan mine, a temporary revival of live stock traffic, the prospects of a fairly good season in agricultural districts, and the activity in the cotton industry, that there will be the moderate increase of £174,660 in railway revenue.

"Other receipts" are estimated to produce £3,500 less than last year.

#### EXPENDITURE.

The strictest economy has been observed in allotting the requirements of departments. The Table hereunder gives the estimated expenditure for the current year—

	£
Schedules ... ..	356,267
Interest on public debt ...	3,582,031

Mr. MORGAN: Interest has crept up.

The TREASURER: Interest has mounted up, and, if I agreed to the hon. member's request for the building of the Tara-Surat railway, it would mount up still further—

	£
Executive and Legislative	23,522
Chief Secretary ... ..	93,443
Home Secretary ... ..	1,405,624
Public Works ... ..	202,621
Justice ... ..	144,114
Treasurer ... ..	390,292
Public Lands ... ..	283,041
Agriculture and Stock	178,971
Public Instruction ... ..	1,299,843
Mines ... ..	81,463
Railways ... ..	4,738,308

Total expenditure £12,779,540

Apart from the payments connected with the public debt and schedule payments, which are fixed by authority of special Acts, the proposed expenditure is £157,817 less than last year. The total estimated expenditure exceeds that of last year by £279,570 only, notwithstanding that an additional amount of £437,632 is provided for payments in connection with the public debt. Interest accounts for £295,935 of the increase, and sinking fund payments on loans, £141,697. It will be remembered that sinking fund payments in respect of various loans were temporarily suspended during the later years of the war; the suspension automatically ceased last financial year, and provision is made on the current year's estimates for £220,541 to cover these payments.

Although the salaries of ministers and members and certain Government employees are being reduced and the requirements of the various services have been cut to the bone, I estimate that the expenditure will exceed the revenue by £576,840.

Summarised, the position is—

	£
Total estimated expenditure	12,779,540
Total estimated revenue ...	12,202,700

Deficit ... .. £576,840

Mr. MORGAN: How are you going to make that up?

The TREASURER: It is intended to continue effecting economies wherever possible, and it is hoped to still further reduce expenditure, and, with any reasonable elasticity in the revenue, the deficiency will be considerably reduced.

#### TRUSTS FUNDS.

Two new items appear in the Trust Estimates for the current year, increasing the proposed expenditure by £570,000, namely, Main Roads Board, £320,000, and Cotton Trading Fund, £250,000. It might be well to explain that the appropriations from Loan Fund for the Main Roads Board are paid to the credit of the Board's trust fund, and, together with the ordinary revenue of the Board, form the fund from which the Board's expenditure is drawn. The provision of the Cotton Fund is for the purchase, ginning, and marketing of this year's crop; the fund will be reimbursed from the sales.

#### LOAN FUND.

The estimated expenditure from Loan Fund during the current year totals £4,929,660. The amount is very large, but it is considered advisable to push on with certain sections of the North Coast Railway and bring them to a revenue-producing point as early as possible.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Ample provision has also been made for the several railways for the settling of the Burnett, and a sum of £200,000 has been provided for resumption of land in the district.

It is intended to bring the Workers' Homes Act into operation—(Hear, hear!)—and the sum of £50,000 has been allotted to provide homes for persons who are not in a position to find the required margin of security applicable to workers' dwellings.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: The appropriation for the Main Roads Board has been increased to £200,000.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The TREASURER: Mr. Kirwan,—I move that there be granted to His Majesty, for the service of the year 1922-1923, the sum of £300 to defray the salary of the aide-de-camp to His Excellency the Governor.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

[9.30 p.m.]

The House resumed.

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The Committee obtained leave to sit again to-morrow.

#### ADJOURNMENT.

The PREMIER: I beg to move—

"That the House do now adjourn."

Mr. FOWLES: What about the hours of sitting to-morrow? Can we not sit from 2 p.m. till 6 p.m.?

The PREMIER: In answer to the hon. gentleman's interjection, I may say that the hon. gentleman made a suggestion to me some time ago, and I am sorry that I did not intimate to him the result of the consideration that was given to that suggestion. I should have done it last week. The matter was considered by the Government, and we considered it inadvisable to alter the hours of sitting. The business to-morrow will be the debate on the Financial Statement.

Question put and passed.

The House adjourned at 9.55 p.m.

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