

Queensland



Parliamentary Debates
[Hansard]

Legislative Assembly

WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1922

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WEDNESDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER, 1922.

The SPEAKER (Hon. W. Bertram, *Maree*) took the chair at 11 a.m.

APPLICATION TO VOTE BY PROXY.

The SPEAKER: I have to announce that I have this day received the following medical certificate from Doctors Wm. Nathaniel Robertson and Alwyn Tom Hays Nisbet, and a notification under the provisions of the Legislative Assembly Act Amendment Act of 1922 from the Hon. J. H. Coyne:—

“ To the Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

“ We, William Nathaniel Robertson and Alwyn T. Hays Nisbet, legally qualified medical practitioners, hereby certify that the Hon. John Harry Coyne, member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Warrego, is in such a state of ill-health, through no fault on his part, that he is unable, and, in our opinion will, during a period of two weeks from the date hereof, be unable to attend any sittings

of the House without gravely endangering his health.

"Given under our hands, at Brisbane, this sixth day of September, 1922.

"W. M. N. ROBERTSON,

"A legally qualified medical practitioner.

"A. T. H. NISBET,

"A legally qualified medical practitioner."

"To the Hon. the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland.

"I, John Harry Coyne, member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Warrego, hereby notify you that I have endeavoured to secure, and, through no fault on my part, have failed to secure a 'pair' during the period of two weeks from the date hereof; and I hereby further notify you that I desire to vote as a member at every sittings of the House and of every Committee of the Whole House by means of a proxy—namely, the Hon. Edward Granville Theodore, member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Chillagoe, or, if the said Hon. Edward Granville Theodore is not present, by another proxy—namely, the Hon. Alfred James Jones, member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Padstow."

"Given under my hand, at Brisbane, this sixth day of September, 1922.

"J. HARRY COYNE,

"Member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland for the electoral district of Warrego."

DECLARATION BY MR. SPEAKER.

The SPEAKER: Pursuant to the requirements of the Legislative Assembly Act Amendment Act of 1922, I declare that I am satisfied that the matters stated in the notification received by me this day from the Hon. J. H. Coyne are true.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—TENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.

BUILDINGS.

Question stated—

"That £95,000 be granted for 'Buildings.'"

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): When the House adjourned last night I was criticising what I regarded as excessive expenditure by the Department of Public Works, in effecting repairs to Government buildings. I made a suggestion to the Minister which would save an enormous amount of money—one which, in my opinion, would be practicable and enable us to have repairs effected in country districts much more economically than is the case at present and under the strictest supervision. I would suggest that the repairs to buildings in the different local authority areas be placed under the control of the local authorities. Each local authority possesses an official who is qualified to make reports on such matters. Each year that official

could make a report upon the condition of each public building in that local authority area, and the report could be forwarded to the Department of Public Works. He could also estimate the cost to place such building in a fit state of repair, and the department could instruct the local authority concerned to spend a certain amount of money in effecting the repairs to the building. It would save the cost of sending a sub-inspector along in the first instance, the cost of sending men long distances to perform the work, and the cost of sending an inspector to report on the work after its completion. The local authorities consist of men elected by the people, and they possess the confidence of the people. The local authorities would be able to save 50 per cent. of the present cost of doing repairs. To-day 100 per cent. to 200 per cent. more is paid in effecting repairs than would be the case under the scheme I have outlined. I feel sure that the officials connected with all the local authorities would only be too willing to perform that work, because they would be given an opportunity of spending their own money, and the local authorities would not hesitate to carry the extra burden.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: As time goes on and the population increases, the local authorities will, no doubt, be called upon to do a great deal more work.

Mr. MORGAN: In places like Brisbane and Toowoomba and other large centres the local authorities need not undertake the work. There could be a staff of men attached to the Department of Public Works, who would be continually employed on large public buildings in those areas. My suggestion would apply to outlying districts. In my electorate there are seven local authorities over which are distributed eighty-five schools. The clerks of the different shires could report on the state of each school building, or the school committee could furnish a report each year. I feel sure that the scheme I have suggested, perhaps with certain modifications, would work satisfactorily and beneficially. When hon. members criticise the department they should be prepared at the same time to offer a remedy for the existing state of affairs. I trust that something will be done to see that these repairs are done by local people, and that a better system will be introduced than is at present followed by the department.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): I think the time has arrived when the Government should put to the test the question as to whether day labour, contract, or piecework should be adopted in the future.

Mr. PEASE: Like the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board.

Mr. VOWLES: I do not know anything about the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. Any casual observer has only to look at the progress of public works in the country, and, if he has any judgment at all, he must come to the conclusion that the system is wrong.

Mr. PEASE: You go up North, and you will see that it is all right. You should see the Innisfail State School.

Mr. VOWLES: I have been up North, and I have seen railway works in the hon. member's own electorate, and I feel very strongly so far as that work is concerned. I travelled along the line, and I did not see

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a great amount of work going on although I saw a lot of men knocking about.

Mr. PEASE: You were not qualified to express an opinion.

Mr. VOWLES: If I see a number of men knocking about and no work going on, then surely I can see that there is something wrong with the system?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you say they were loafing on the job?

Mr. VOWLES: That was my impression. When I was sitting behind the previous Government I made the same observations. Frequent reference has been made to the statement of Mr. Paget when Secretary for Railways, and that is the one thing that this Government fall back on—that the Secretary for Railways in a previous Government advocated the day-labour system as against contract or piecework. But there was a tremendous amount of piecework done in connection with railway construction in those days. When the Jandowae line was being built a good deal of piecework was done, and it was remarkable to see the rate at which they did the work and the amount of spare time they had.

I would support the remarks of the hon. member for Murilla so far as country work is concerned. It is grossly unfair to men in country districts that, when a little Government work is being done, that work should be monopolised by outside men.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We get local labour when it is available.

Mr. VOWLES: You do not. In every direction men say they cannot get Government work, and that strangers are doing the work.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The district foremen in my department have instructions to obtain local labour when it is available.

Mr. VOWLES: Those instructions must have been given very recently, because carpenters and all classes of workmen have complained to me that, though work may be available, they never have an opportunity of getting it. I made reference to this matter in 1913—I think that was the first time I spoke in this House. Speaking on the Address in Reply, I made these remarks—

“I would like to say, in conclusion, that I think the time has arrived when the Government”—

I was then sitting behind the Government—
“should make a trial in the construction of railways by contract.”

I had just seen what was being done in connection with the construction of the Tara Railway. It was notorious that plenty of men on that work who were paid full wages did very little work. I further said—

“I am connected with a local authority, and we found that it was absolutely necessary to find out what we were getting for our money—to find out if we were asked to pay more for day labour than we would be by contract. I do not mind telling you that we found that we were not getting a fair thing from the men by day labour. The same thing applies to the construction of railway lines by day labour. I am certain it applied to the construction of the Tara line,

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because there were dozens of men drawing pay who were not doing their work at all.”

“Mr. Kirwan: That is a strong indictment on the Railway Department.

“Mr. VOWLES: Yes, it is; but it is true all the same.”

I was a supporter of that Government—

“Mr. Kirwan: Will you support a Royal Commission to inquire into the Railway Department?

“Mr. VOWLES: Yes.”

You will remember we had that Commission, Mr. Kirwan—(laughter)—

“I do not see why we should allow such a state of things to exist in our own interests. We are the custodians of the people's money, and we should find out which is the most profitable way to carry on. Personally, I do not believe in huge contracts and huge profits, but I do not agree with the present system adopted by the officers of the Railway Department as to the cost of a railway. There is no one to check their estimates at all. They simply make an estimate, and if they do it for less than the estimate they turn round and say that they made a profit of so much. Anyone can do that. If I know a thing will cost £10,000, they will be on the safe side I will say it will cost £12,000; and if I do it for £11,000, I will say that that is a profit of £1,000.”

That is the principle in operation to-day—

“Mr. Murphy”—

He was a member of the Opposition—

“Mr. Murphy: What about the statement which the Minister for Railways presented the other night?

“Mr. VOWLES: My experience has been that the day-labour system is dearer than contract work. In our district we have proved that you get more value out of contract work.

“Mr. Gillies: What about the Cairns Railway?

“Mr. VOWLES: I know that the hon. gentlemen opposite advocate day labour. It is part of their religion, and they cannot advocate anything else. But I am giving facts as to what happened in my own district.”

I have not altered my opinion; in fact, what applied in those days applies a great deal more to-day. We can give cases of work in connection with charitable institutions which have come within our own experience. I know, for instance, what the work in connection with the Laidley Hospital could have been done for, and I know what it cost. I know what the work in connection with the Dalby Hospital could have been done for, and I know what it actually cost. I was one of the committee of the Dalby Hospital. A contractor was prepared to do the job at a certain price, but we were not allowed to get the work done by contract, and had to employ day labour. The day-labour estimate was more than 50 per cent. above the contract price on the same specification.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Are you sure of that?

Mr. VOWLES: It was not on the same specification—the departmental specification

was drawn up afterwards—but it was substantially the same. I saw the specification, and I ought to know.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: How would you know whether the timbers were heavy enough or not?

Mr. VOWLES: Surely I can know the size of the timbers, the same as the hon. gentleman.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You might know their size, but you might not know whether the sizes were adequate.

Mr. VOWLES: I had at my elbow the contractor who made the original specification, and he made a comparison, and he knew what he was talking about. The excuse given by the Minister previously was that we would not get the same quality of work under the contract system. Why should we not get the same quality of work when we have the same inspector? I should say that, when a private individual is doing the work, the inspector will be more careful, probably, than when the department is doing it under the day-labour system. One of the planks of the Country party platform is that in connection with the expenditure of public money the question of contract versus day labour should be put to the test.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You have more planks than that. What about the repayment of the money paid under the "Repudiation" Act?

Mr. VOWLES: I am speaking in the interests of the public who have to find the money from revenue and eventually to pay the money taken from loan funds. All I ask is that the Government should put it to the test, and let the department carry on the work the same as a private contractor would do it.

There is another matter which I wish to bring before the Minister in connection with the accommodation for the Supreme Court library. Plans for additional accommodation were prepared in 1899, and I understand that money was voted, but nothing has since been done. I am informed that the library is now at the limit of expansion, and, unless additional space is provided, valuable books will have to be put on the floor. The High Court judges have stated that our Supreme Court library is the most complete law library in Australia.

At 11.20 a.m.,

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

Mr. VOWLES: The value of the library alone—and remember not one penny for the library has been found by the Government; it is all contributed by the legal profession of Queensland—is £25,000, and the number of volumes amounts to 30,000. So you can see that some consideration should be given to this question. The establishment of Industrial Arbitration Courts and the legislation that we have had in connection with land matters and other matters make it urgent that we should be able to record all judicial decisions in the library, and be able to get at those records conveniently. The library is not only for the benefit of the legal profession, but of other people, too. The whole of the library has been provided by the legal pro-

fession, without cost to the Government, and the librarian points out that they even pay for the "Government Gazette." The Government are not even asked to provide that. The Government provide lighting—which is not used—and cleaning. The cleaning of the library is a portion of the cleaning of the Supreme Court building, and does not amount to much. I am informed that the Attorney-General inspected the library and agreed that more space was necessary. I may say that the library is constantly used by the Crown Law Officers.

Mr. BRENNAN: And by the profession, too.

Mr. VOWLES: Yes. They have the opportunity of getting a lot of useful law reports from America gratis, but cannot do so for lack of space. I think that in an institution like that, which is one to be proud of and which has cost the Government nothing, it is only right that the Government should provide housing space for the books. I might point out to the Attorney-General that since the rearrangement of our courts space previously occupied is now available. Those offices might be required when there is a congestion of work, but at present they are available, and I think that something might be done by the Government to provide sufficient space for housing the books. The very fact that the Crown Law Officers utilise the library shows that the Government are getting as much benefit from the library as the legal profession; and rightly so, because the Crown Law Officers all belong to the profession. I may say that, if the legal profession did not make the necessary provision for this library, it would be necessary for the Government to find a building and a place for housing the books for the use of the Crown Law Officers. All records have to be housed somewhere, and the Government are not called upon to do it at present. I ask the Department of Public Works and the Attorney-General to give special consideration to this matter, because it is a matter of urgency. It is just as much in the interests of the Crown as in the interests of the legal profession that sufficient space be provided.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): I wish to reply to certain remarks made by the hon. member for Murilla last evening, when the hon. member certainly gave false information to the Committee with reference to the closing of schools in his electorate. The hon. gentleman asked me a question on 11th July last about the schools that have been closed in the Murilla electorate, and I gave him a very full reply. I told him that the schools were closed owing to the fact that the number of pupils attending them fell below the regulation number. The return which I gave in answer to the hon. gentleman's question was very clear. The hon. gentleman gave further criticism to-day, and stated that he did not criticise without suggesting a remedy. I gave a very full explanation in answer to the hon. gentleman's question, but, as I do not know if the Committee will get to my Estimates, and I may not have a chance of replying then, I am going now to scotch the false statements of the hon. gentleman. The schools closed in the Murilla electorate during the last financial year were closed owing to the average attendance being below nine scholars. The hon. member for Port Curtis

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knows that I do not always close a school when the attendance falls below nine scholars. The hon. member for Burnett knows the same. When hon. members have come to me and asked me to be lenient with regard to schools in their electorates where the attendance has fallen below the required number, I have always given expression to their wishes. Hon. members will see how the remarks of the hon. member for Murilla coincide with the reply I gave him on 11th July. He asked me how many schools were closed in his electorate during the financial year ended 30th June, 1922, owing to the average attendance being below nine scholars. The hon. gentleman in his remarks yesterday said that one school was closed that had an attendance of eight or nine scholars, but the hon. gentleman was not quite correct when he said that. The average attendance at schools in the Murilla electorate, at the date of closing, was 3.6 in one case, 7.2 in another, 6.1 in another, 7.0 in another, and 7.6 in another. If the hon. member thought that we were wasting public money in other directions I do not suppose anyone would be more strongly condemnatory than the hon. member himself. He takes exception because we close schools in the country when the attendance falls below a certain number, and raises the question of opening a high school in South Brisbane. I suppose that the cost to the State of keeping open all the schools below that number would be £12,000 in bare maintenance, and I do not suppose, on the other hand, that the cost of maintaining a high school at South Brisbane would be two-thirds of that amount. Those schools were closed under a regulation which was not framed by myself but by previous Governments, and rightly so, too, that no school should be kept open with an attendance of less than twelve. I have kept them open if the attendance has been as low as nine, and I have done it so that the country people should not be inconvenienced more than is absolutely necessary. In answer to question No. 2, I told the hon. member that thirty-five schools of all descriptions had been closed in Queensland during the year ended 30th June, 1922, for similar reasons, but that during the same period sixty-seven new schools had been opened and thirty-three had been reopened. I do not think that any hon. member, no matter on what side he may sit, will say that I have neglected country schools since I have been in the department.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I think the hon. member should be, not generous, but just in recognising that fact, and also that I gave him full information in answer to his questions; and under those circumstances he ought not to bring the matter up again. In other cases I have refused to keep schools open because of the treatment sometimes meted out to school teachers. In some places a female teacher has been treated almost like cattle, and has been expected to do her own washing and also to assist in the work of the household in which she was lodging.

There is another matter to which I would like to refer as indicating that hon. members should be more careful about accusing a department which is endeavouring to do its best to cater for all the children in the country. The hon. member for Murilla

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made a certain complaint last night about the Goondiwindi school, and the Minister in charge of the Estimates of the Department of Public Works told him that the work would be done, and yet he continued to haggle about the matter. If I were in the position of the Minister, I would consider that a poor return for the courtesy he always shows to hon. members.

Mr. MORGAN: What did the Minister say?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: He said most emphatically that the work had been approved and would be done.

Mr. MORGAN: And I thanked him for it.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: In a very belated fashion. However, my colleague can deal with that matter. I am replying to the hon. member for Murilla who has repeatedly accused me of summarily closing down country schools.

Mr. MAXWELL (*Toowong*): I am glad to know that it is the intention of the department to spend a certain amount of money in the repair and painting of public buildings throughout the State. On a previous occasion I referred to the condition of public buildings in and around the metropolitan area, particularly the Supreme Court. The Treasury Buildings also require repairs and painting, and I am hopeful that the Government will proceed with the work because, if such buildings are not looked after properly, it will eventually cost a tremendous lot to put them in decent order. I hope that the Minister will go and have a look at some of the material used in public buildings—the Taringa school, for instance—before he starts to paint them. The Secretary for Public Instruction and I visited that school.

[11.30 a.m.]

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That was done under the contract system—not by the department.

Mr. MAXWELL: It was done with material exactly similar to what is being used in the department now.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you know what the trouble was?

Mr. MAXWELL: Yes. I resent very much the hon. gentleman making a statement like he has made, because he knows that the men who did the painting of that school did it according to the specification which had been prepared by the department. His statement is a libel upon the officers in the department, because it means that they did not look after the work or the men who were doing the work. A tremendous amount of money is involved, because, from the ceiling right down to the bottom portion of the wall, it has to be burnt off. We do not want anything like that in the material that is being used. I want the hon. gentleman to refer to the class of material specified, so that it will not be used again.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I did not draw up the specification.

Mr. MAXWELL: I am not blaming the Minister, but I am advising him from a practical standpoint that he can save money by not using that class of material. I am

quite prepared to go through this building with the Minister.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am inclined to agree with you as to the cause.

Mr. MAXWELL: The hon. member for South Brisbane said yesterday—

“There is no comparison between the two systems, not only in regard to cost, but in the durability and completeness of the work.”

Last session, when speaking on the Estimates, I referred hon. members opposite to the contract job done for the State Insurance building. Will any man in this House say that that is not a first-class job? That was a contract job. Will any man say that the Executive Building is not a splendid job? That was a contract job. It is a libel upon the officers of the department to say that they cannot see that the work is carried out according to the specifications. I have yet to learn that we can get any idea from the department as to what a job done by day labour is going to cost, unless we get it by asking questions in this House. On 22nd August last the leader of the Opposition asked the following question in connection with the painting of Parliament House:—

“1. What was the number of superficial feet of painting in the job of painting exterior woodwork and fence of Parliament House?

“2. What was the estimated cost of this work?

“3. What was the time taken for completion of the work?

“4. What was the actual cost—

(a) Wages;

(b) Material;

(c) Total cost?”

The reply was—

“1. 88,614 superficial feet.

“2. £1,836 16s.

“3. Five months.

“4.—

(a) £1,226 19s. 8d.;

(b) £373;

(c) £1,599 19s. 8d.

“This sum covers cost of a large amount of burning off, preparation, filling, etc.”

Hon. members opposite would lead you to believe that, because the estimate submitted by the department was £1,836 16s. and the actual cost was approximately £1,600, there had been a saving of over £200. In my opinion, the Government have paid too dearly for the painting of this building. There are 9,846 square yards, and they have paid about 3s. 3d. per square yard for the work. I venture to say that there is not a painting contractor in this city who would have got anywhere near that amount for the work. I am taking that as a general average for two, three, and four coat work and burning off. With their policy of day labour the Government are strangling the men outside, and will not give them an opportunity to earn sufficient to pay the infernal taxation which they are heaping upon them. If you get a dishonest contractor—a man who is not “dinkum”—you have your remedy; you can cut him out. There are men whose names stand for honour, honesty,

and integrity in the building trade. Any officer of the department would be prepared to admit that. There are instances in which they would be quite prepared to say they could hand the man the specification and could go away knowing full well that the specification would be carried out in its entirety; and, if it were needed, a little extra work would be done to make the job something worth having.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the job on the fence outside?

Mr. MAXWELL: That is entirely a question of the material. The Minister understands that question better than the hon. member. The painting of this building was just an ordinary job.

Mr. RYAN: It is well picked out in colours.

Mr. MAXWELL: It is an ordinary painter's job; there is nothing in it that an ordinary tradesman could not do. There is a little gilding on the doors and a coat of varnish—which any tradesman could do. I object most strenuously to any member opposite saying that our business men are not just as competent to do a decent job as are those employed under the day-labour system. The Government are paying too dearly for their whistle, and it means that the public are paying too dearly. With two coats, the department could have got this job done for 1s. 4d. per square yard; with three coats they could have got it done for 1s. 8d.; with burning off, at the very outside, it would have cost 2s. 10d. or 3s. I would be prepared to do it myself at those rates.

Mr. BRENNAN: You are referring to kalsomining. (Laughter.)

Mr. MAXWELL: All the kalsomining and whitewashing in the world would not make the hon. member white. (Laughter.) The Government have an opportunity of proving to the people whether this day-labour system is right or wrong. We have heard it said that a former Secretary for Railways—Mr. Paget—made certain statements in connection with day labour. I remember that when I was associated with the Brisbane City Council I advocated that we should secure a blacksmith's shop for ourselves, and not continue to have our smithing done outside.

Mr. WILSON: That was done before the hon. member came on to the council. We were doing all our work by day labour.

Mr. MAXWELL: The statement I have made is perfectly correct. There was some trouble about it, and some of the aldermen considered that the money should be shared amongst the ratepayers. Then again, there was the question of securing a quarry for the council. The hon. member for Fortitude Valley will admit that I, with others, played a very prominent part in that matter. The department at the present time is not doing the right thing. The people from whom the Government expect to receive taxation are the very people they are strangling in industry. What better proof can I have of the desirability of again introducing the contract system than the remarks made by hon. members on the other side? We know that hon. members opposite, when they desire to have work done in their own homes, have it done by contract. I do not blame them. They know exactly what amount of money they will have to pay. I object to their inconsistency in advocating day labour

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for the Government and the adoption of the contract system for themselves.

I desire to give an illustration of some work being done by the department in order to prove that the day-labour system is costing too much as compared with work performed under the contract system. In the Townsville and Innisfail districts a school and a worker's dwelling were erected. I have the information from a person who is able to speak with authority on the matter. The school, which consists merely of four walls, is 31 feet by 22 feet, the schoolroom being 14 feet by 21 feet. That room is painted inside, and there are two verandas 8 feet wide, which means that the verandas measure 22 feet by 8 feet. That building cost £102 a square, or £782, and the people have been told that, if they want any further buildings like that erected, the cost will be £820. In the same area, under practically the same supervision, a worker's dwelling was erected. That cottage is 26 feet by 42 feet, and it is divided into four rooms, with a kitchen and two verandas. That means that there are two cross partitions, one partition down the centre, and one partition on the back veranda forming a room for the kitchen. It has five points of water, ceiled throughout and painted on the outside. That building was erected at the rate of £58 a square or a cost of £635. In comparison with the cost of construction of the school building, we must conclude that there is something wrong. Both buildings are permanently constructed, because they are under the supervision of the men from the same department. Those men see that the buildings are erected in accordance with specifications that are submitted. I am tired of hearing hon. members opposite holding our business men and contractors up to criticism. They want people to believe that they possess all the honesty on their side and that we are representing trusts and combines and dishonest contractors, and that we do not stand for a decent and fair deal to the people of this community.

Mr. PEASE: Has it not been proved?

Mr. MAXWELL: No.

Mr. PEASE: You tried to bribe our members, but you could not do it. Where did the money come from?

Mr. MAXWELL: I hope that the people who did attempt to do that will be properly dealt with. Every year we are given an opportunity to discuss this question contained in the vote. This department is a spending department, and we should be assured that the money is properly spent. If the Minister or his officers desire any further information in connection with the buildings I have quoted I shall be only too pleased to supply it. There is a number of buildings that require to be repaired and painted. The late Home Secretary, Mr. Huxham, always lent a sympathetic ear and had the work carried out when the money was available. These are the homes inhabited by some of our teachers, and I do not consider that they are fit and proper homes. If it is good enough to give ourselves decent homes to live in, then surely it is good enough to see that those people are properly housed. In one portion of my electorate there is a school house, and in one room the rafters can be seen. In a climate like ours that is not a right thing. I propose to discuss the matter later on with the Minister, when I am satisfied I will get a reasonable amount of consideration.

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HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): I desire to deal with the points raised by hon. members opposite. The hon. member for Enoggera argued that wooden buildings should be a charge against revenue, and that it was a wrong thing to construct public buildings and State schools out of loan funds.

Mr. KERR: I said "unproductive buildings."

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member did not give any definition of that term. I am personally of the opinion that public schools are among our most productive works.

Mr. KERR: Not from the financial point of view.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is no balance-sheet produced showing a certain amount of pounds, shillings, and pence, but the benefit to the State and to the people of the State from the construction of public schools and the education given in them is incalculable.

Mr. KERR: That is not the question.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Everyone must realise that, if public buildings such as State schools are to be a charge on revenue, and on revenue only, then there will be very few of them built each year.

Mr. KERR: That was done before.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It has never been done, as was stated by the hon. member. The practice adopted by the department has been in vogue for many years past, and it is perfectly sound. The hon. member for Enoggera argued that the cost of such works should be charged against revenue, but the life of a properly constructed and properly maintained wooden building is indefinite. I know of wooden buildings which are forty years old, which have been properly looked after, and the timber to-day is much better than a good deal of the timber which is put into new buildings. It is a question of good construction in the first place and proper maintenance in the second place, and then the life of these buildings, at the very least, is thirty years; and, as the people of the future get a benefit from the buildings erected now, it is only a fair thing that they should be called upon to pay a portion of the cost. If it is to be laid down by this Committee that wooden buildings such as State schools, some of which cost £2,000 or £3,000 for construction—if it is to be laid down that that work can only be done from revenue funds then we must decide that only a very few works can be built. The whole contention is unsound, and the hon. member for Enoggera has not fully considered the question, or he would not have put forward the arguments that he did.

The point was raised by the hon. member for Murilla that a better system should be inaugurated in connection with small jobs in country districts. I know that work in remote districts is pretty costly, due to the fact that it is costly to get the material on the job, and often men have to be sent from some other place to do the work. I wish to state that definite instructions have been given to all the district foremen that, so far as possible, local labour is to be employed on all jobs under the Department of Public Works. If there is a job in any centre and the carpenter or any other tradesman required is available locally, then that local

man must get the job. Of course we recognise that certain tradesmen are very scarce. Take plasterers, for example. We know that there are not too many plasterers in certain portions of the State, and, when there is a plastering job to be done in a remote district, often a man has to be sent from the nearest large town to that district; but, when there are suitable men available in any given locality, then those men are given the work, and those have been my instructions to the district foremen in charge.

Another point raised by the hon. member was in connection with small jobs, and he said that work that could have been done for about £5 very often cost a great deal more through having to send men from a distance to do that work. I gave instructions a long time ago—I mentioned it on last year's Estimates—that work required by school committees should be reported upon. If it is only a small matter, it is our practice to give the school committee authority to get the work done on the spot. That is a sound principle, and it is being carried out by the department. I could, if I felt so disposed, give quite a number of cases where local committees have been authorised to do certain urgent and necessary repairs, which has resulted in advantage to them and in a saving to the department. Some hon. members argue that these local committees should have more authority than they have at the present time to incur expenditure, but I would point out there are 1,760 schools in Queensland, and, if I were to give the committees of each of those schools authority to spend, say, £50 each, the sum in the aggregate would be very large, and the department would be losing control over the expenditure. Personally I think the system in vogue is better and more economical.

It has further been suggested by the hon. member for Murilla that local authorities should be asked to take up this work and do it for the department. I do not know that much advantage would accrue from that. It has been argued by various hon. members that the Department of Public Works carries on the work in a somewhat costly manner. That is not correct, but there is no guarantee that local authorities could do the work any cheaper than it is being done at the present time. I know in my own department that all local authority loan works are subject to the scrutiny and inspection of officers of the department, and during the last five years there have been very few cases indeed where local authorities have been able to carry out the work under the estimate. As a general rule, they, in common with everyone else, have exceeded the estimate, due in most cases to contingencies over which they have no control. That is an indication that there is no guarantee if local authorities carried out the work for the department that they would be able to carry it out as well and at as low a cost as the department is carrying it out at the present time.

Much has been said by way of general criticism with regard to the day-labour question. We know that this is a hardy annual. It is debated every time these Estimates come up for discussion. Where honest and faithful service is given the day-labour policy is the most satisfactory for Government work. We know that that is so. The Government employ men direct who have the fullest

capacity to do the work, and they save to a very large extent what would be the contractors' profits. I know that contractors are not in the business for the good of their health. They naturally look for a margin of profit on every job that they undertake. We have access to men just as skilled in construction as the men whom the contractors have; we have the same men who can be employed to do the work, and with proper supervision on the one hand and faithful service on the other, we invariably effect a saving amounting to the margin of profit which would ordinarily represent the contractors' profit. That was done in the case of the Children's Hospital. The saving effected on the estimate there was £6,859 4s. It has been argued that we prepare any old estimate at all. When the estimate was given for the Children's Hospital the committee had the price checked by private enterprise—by men qualified to express an opinion on the value of work—and it was found by the committee that our price was a very fair one, having regard to the cost of building construction at the present time. Yet we effected a saving of practically £7,000 on that job, which means that an amount of £7,000 is available for other work which is necessary at the Children's Hospital. Had that work been done by a contractor, that amount would have represented his profit. I am not suggesting that the profit would be an unfair one. The point I am making is this—that the profit is saved to the Children's Hospital on this occasion, and an amount of £7,000 is available for further work that is required at that institution. Had the work been done by a contractor, it would not have been possible to do work that is necessary, and which is now being commenced. Then, again, take into consideration matters affecting [11 a.m.] the same institution. We know that those funds are subsidised by my department, and it proposed to call tenders for the furnishing of the hospital. I pointed out that the department was not prepared to subsidise funds unless the departmental workshops were given an opportunity to do the work. I was asked if we were prepared to give the committee a price, which could be compared with other tenders. We submitted a price on the same specifications as private enterprise, and our price was £500 lower than the lowest tender. That represented a saving of £500 on the furniture of the institution.

MR. CORSER: Tenders were called.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Tenders were called and put before the committee. Our price was £500 less than the lowest tender.

MR. CORSER: You carried out the work and made a loss on it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: We made a profit of £53. If works are carried out for less than the estimate, then the institution gets the benefit of what is saved. If the cost exceeds the estimate, they are called upon for the amount of the excess.

I deprecate the statements made from time to time charging the workers of this State with going slow. It is very easy for men following professional occupations to criticise those who are following manual occupations.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I saw an instance of that some years ago at Mayne

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Junction, where there was a lot of heavy soil being handled by navvies. It was a very hot day in December. I was in a first class compartment, which was full of business men coming into town—men who had never followed a manual occupation in their lives. The train was hung up there for ten minutes, and the occupants of the compartment spent the time in criticising the rate at which the navvies worked. I looked at the men who were criticising, and recognised that ten minutes of that navy work would probably have settled any of them. It is quite easy to argue in a comfortable carriage that a man doing heavy work is going slow; but we must recognise that these men work eight hours a day, and consequently have to work at a rate which they can maintain for eight hours a day every day in the week. It is possible that a man might for five minutes do a little more work, but he would not be able to keep up the pace. In other words, a sprinter can run 100 yards much quicker than a long-distance runner goes, but he would not be able to maintain the same pace for a mile as he can sprint 100 yards. That comparison is sound, and I deprecate charges being made by professional men against manual workers of going slow. Let me say that I have no time for the advocate of the "go slow" policy. I recognise that anyone who deliberately limits production or loafs on any job is doing something not only contrary to his own interests but something damaging to the State as a whole. (Hear, hear!) The system of curtailing production is just as bad as giving short weight or adulterating goods exposed for sale. But I believe that workers are entitled to fair and decent conditions. I claim that they are entitled to the best conditions that can be given either by the Government or by private employers; but, having been granted those conditions, there is a moral obligation on the part of every workman, no matter what occupation he may be following, to give his best service in return. (Hear, hear!) That is the view I take; and no industry and no country can be built up on any other system. We know that present conditions are due to certain causes. We know that there are certain individuals in the community who are desirous of getting on. They are desirous of making money, and consequently are not too scrupulous sometimes in the methods by which they obtain funds. The idea has been to get as much as possible for as little service as possible. That is the basis of the present system of society—to get as much as possible in return for as little service as possible. That breeds profiteering, food adulteration, and short weight on the one hand, and sometimes the "go slow" policy on the other. Economically they are both bad, and morally they are both wrong. We should endeavour to have a system under which work can be carried out under just and fair conditions and at a minimum of cost. Speaking generally, in my department we get that fair service; but, in common with other classes of employers, we find there are some individuals who occasionally seek to impose on the department. When those individuals are found out, they are dealt with. Of course, some things may go on in remote places that we are not cognisant of for the time being, but we insist on faithful service to the department; and, speaking generally, we get it. We are fortunate in having a staff of experts who are second to none in

Queensland. The experts of the construction branch in my department will compare with those of any department in Australia. They carry on the work efficiently and effectively, and so it is right through the department. We have men in the department at various occupations—carpenters, painters, plumbers, builders' labourers, and all the other occupations in connection with construction work. We have as fine a lot of men as can be got together in any part of the world. We have a certain percentage of failures—and every industrial organisation carried out on a large scale must expect to have those exceptions—but when we get into touch with the matter the necessary action is taken, and we do not allow it to be repeated.

Reference has been made during the debate to the amount of funds which are provided under this vote. The hon member for Albert said that the amount was not nearly enough to cover the cost of buildings which were required, and he made particular reference to the school at Canungra. I find from the report of the Department of Public Instruction that there are 86 pupils at that school, and that the average attendance is 81.8 per cent. The existing building has accommodation for ninety-six pupils, and, while the work may be desirable, it is not pressing in view of more urgent cases. With this information from the Department of Public Instruction, it is hardly to be expected that I would authorise work of that kind to be started. The building is an old one, and not as up to date in design as the buildings we are putting up now. We know that in the past all forms of building construction in Queensland left much to be desired. A class of building was put up which was more suitable for a cold climate than our climate, but of late years we have been putting up a class of school with up-to-date lighting and ventilation, and in accordance with the requirements of the Queensland climate. While it is desirable at some future time to make alterations to the school at Canungra, in view of the report of the Department of Public Instruction, I would not be justified in doing that work when there is more urgent work to be done in other places.

Let me refer to the Goondiwindi school, which was mentioned by the hon. member for Murilla. I have approved of fencing and other work amounting to £1,795 being done there. That work is desirable, and has been deferred for some time. We are preparing working plans and specifications, and the work will be gone on with at a very early date.

I will now deal with the general question of the cost of work. We know that the cost in connection with buildings has gone up enormously since 1914, due to causes over which we have no present control. I have a list here which is very interesting and gives valuable information when considering the question of value for money expended. It has been argued by hon. members opposite, inferentially and otherwise, that costs have gone up owing to what they consider to be excessive labour costs. The increases that have taken place in wages are not nearly so great as the increases that have taken place in the cost of material. The increases that have been given by various awards in connection with the building industry are quite justified in every detail. That is my view of

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recognise in the report of the department the saving that has been effected in various votes. That saving has been effected very largely by the improved efficiency of the department in the first place, and, secondly, by the fall that has taken place in the cost of material. Certain works are reported to be necessary. If I could get the money voted by Parliament, I could spend with advantage a great deal more than is provided in this vote, but it is my duty to keep within the vote. Consequently, when members come forward with propositions, either for repairs or additions or new schools, they must realise that, if those propositions are turned down, it is due solely to the fact that funds are not available for that purpose. I get lists from time to time from the Department of Public Instruction recommending certain work. The hon. member for Albert last night said that a large amount of work had been approved which had never been carried out. He was not accurate in making that statement, because every work that is approved is gone on with.

Mr. MOORE: When?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Straight away.

Mr. MOORE: Nonsense.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Department of Public Instruction supply their list to me, and I have charge of the vote. I must see to it that I do not exceed the vote, and I have no intention, if it is at all possible, of exceeding any of my votes. When I get those lists I must have due regard to the funds available for that class of work. I take the most urgent works first. If one work is more urgent than another, then the more urgent work is gone on with.

Some hon. members asked last night: What about the districts where there are no schools at all? We might have, for example, two propositions: We have a proposition in a new district where there is no school, and where there are twenty children waiting for a school to be erected so that they can get the necessary education. In the adjoining electorate there may be a proposition to add to a school. The cost of both propositions may be the same. The addition may be desirable and necessary work, but I certainly say that where no school is in existence, that is the more necessary work of the two. (Hear, hear!) That is the plan I adopt in deciding what works shall be gone on with. I recognise that, so far as 90 per cent. of the population in Queensland are concerned, the only education they ever get is at the primary schools; consequently, I say that every effort should be made to make the facilities for primary education as good as possible and as up-to-date as possible. The children in the outback districts have always got my sympathy and support in connection with propositions of this kind. You will find, in connection with the expenditure last year, that all the expenditure on school buildings was practically confined to buildings that were urgently necessary in country districts. It was all practically spent on primary schools. Technical education is also a necessary thing, and no country can improve if it neglects secondary and technical education, but primary education, in my opinion, is more important. I think sometimes that we may be inclined to overdo what is referred to as technical education.

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I find many people are applying for positions in offices as stenographers and typists. If you advertise for anyone to fill a position of that kind, you will have a multitude of applicants for it, and I sometimes think that our secondary schools are turning out too many of those who desire to follow that class of occupation. I am one of those who believe that we should teach people to do useful things. It is far better for a girl, for example, to be able to make a shirt than that she should be able to take down her husband's remarks in shorthand. (Laughter.) I think that a shirt is much more important than shorthand. (Laughter.) Everything is done that can be done when funds are available for that purpose. Funds were limited last year and the year before, due to causes over which the department had no control, and over which the Government had no control. We know that hon. members opposite, or at least their supporters outside, were responsible for the curtailment of public expenditure that was so necessary in this State. We know that they were responsible for sending a delegation to London which limited the loan funds being made available for this Government.

Mr. KING: Good old delegation! You are building on a rotten foundation.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Those people were responsible for the curtailment in expenditure in this direction. It is well known to me that the party opposite have a policy which they have placed before the public, and that they also have a policy which they decided on at a secret junta. (Opposition laughter.) Does the leader of the Opposition deny that his party executive have come to certain decisions? Can the hon. member for Townsville deny that his party received funds from the South for certain purposes; and can he deny that some members of his party have stated that members who were to contest Northern electorates at the next election would be pledged to repay the money which the squatters have paid under what they call the "Repudiation Act"?

Mr. MOORE: What did the Labour Conference carry last October?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member knows all about that. I have here—

"QUEENSLAND COUNTRY PARTY.

"Minutes of Executive Council held at Union Bank Chambers on Friday, 23rd June, 1922, at 11 a.m."—

Mr. WARREN: Another stolen document.

Mr. MAXWELL: How much did you give for that?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH:

"Present.

"South—

Mr. J. P. Peterson,
Mr. J. A. Austin,
Mr. J. W. Newbery,
Mr. W. G. Batchler,
Mr. E. G. Parnell.

"North—

Mr. C. V. Hives,
Mr. E. C. Garbutt,
Mr. R. H. Edkins,
Mr. W. H. Green, M.L.A.

"Central—

Mr. A. L. Macdonald,
Mr. J. Gay.

"Mr. W. Mallet, the remaining delegate for the South, sent an apology for his unavoidable absence. Mr. W. F. R. Boyce (organising secretary) and Mr. W. A. Fielding (organiser) were in attendance.

"Minutes.

"The minutes of the previous meeting were read. Moved by Mr. Hives and seconded by Mr. Austin—That the minutes of the Executive Council meeting of 20th January, 1922, as read, be confirmed.—Carried.

Finance Committee.

"The Chairman reported that the sub-committee appointed at last meeting had met, but, in view of the present unsatisfactory position of parties, nothing had been done towards getting any funds together.

"Mr. Austin asked what about the funds received in the South, to some part of which the Primary Producers' Organisation was entitled.

"Mr. Edkins said they were trying to get the policy adopted of having these funds contributed through the proper channels in Queensland.

"Mr. Garbutt said some contributions have an attached condition that they are not to be given to the Country party unless some unity is observed."

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: I would ask the hon. gentleman how he connects this with the vote?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am connecting it. Hon. members opposite are complaining of the curtailment by this Government of expenditure on public buildings. I am able to show that there are any amount of building propositions with which we could have gone on with last year had the funds been available, and I am pointing out that the activities of hon. members opposite have been responsible for this curtailment. We find them receiving subscriptions from the South which are to be used for no other purpose than to secure the defeat of this Government. Hon. members opposite have accused us of lavish expenditure on other occasions. They have said that our expenditure of public funds was not carried out on sound lines.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Quite right.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: They have said that we spent money foolishly and extravagantly and in a way for which we got no return.

Mr. MOORE: Quite right.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: We are justified in asking what class of expenditure they would go in for if they had the opportunity. I find also in these minutes the following:—

"Mr. Garbutt said he had been entrusted by the Northern Divisional Council with resolutions—

1. To recommend the inclusion of a pledge for repeal of the Caucus repudiatory legislation which had so disastrously affected the credit of this State.

2. To enter a solemn protest against the recent political interference with the judiciary.

3. To condemn the hasty abolition of the Legislative Council in direct

opposition to the expressed will of the people and to reaffirm adherence to the principle of the bi-cameral system with an elective second Chamber.

4. To recall all privileges granted as a reward for repudiation.

"Mr. Edkins thought that although all this was intended to be done, it was nevertheless bad tactics to put it in the front window. He suggested a redrafted resolution to cover the whole matter.

"Mr. Parnell said many people wanted to know exactly what we proposed to do when we attained power. It would pay best to be honest and tell them straight out.

"The Chairman asked how far it was proposed that we go in the matter of repeal? Were moneys got in under the increased rents to be refunded? It was a tall order.

"Mr. Garbutt said every Northern candidate would be pledged to a refund of all money taken from landowners by this repudiatory legislation.

"Mr. Macdonald agreed that the public should be told just what the Country party proposed to do.

"Mr. Gay said the refund ought certainly to be made, but he doubted the wisdom of making it a front plank of the policy. It would not appeal to the small man."

Mr. Edkins's idea was supported, and this resolution was agreed to—

"That this Council is determined to repeal the repudiatory legislation introduced by the present Caucus Government, and which has been so detrimental to the interests of both landholders and their employees, and to the general financial position of the State, affecting all sections of the community."

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. MAXWELL: Quite true.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Hon. members opposite say that those are words of wisdom.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Bear in mind that Mr. Edkins said that it would be "bad tactics to put it in the front window." I am justified in saying that the party opposite have one policy which they place before the people, and that they have another policy which is decided by a junta and kept secret.

Mr. MOORE: People in glass houses should not throw stones.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Something like half a million pounds has been paid in rent under what they call the "Repudiation Act," and Mr. Garbutt said that all the Northern candidates were to be pledged to refund all that money.

Mr. FLETCHER: That is impossible. (Government laughter.)

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: But they say it is not wise to have it in the "front window." Consequently, I think it is correct to say that they have a secret policy. If they are going to return that money, where are they going to get it from?

Mr. FLETCHER: We are not going to refund it.

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HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The Country party would be pledged to give half a million pounds to supporters of the Opposition and take it off public buildings. It was quite in accordance with their policy of double dealing that this Council of the Country party would discuss the question of publicity; and, knowing of their duplicity, we are not surprised to read the following:—

“Discussion ensued as to the measure and method of giving publicity to the decisions of this Council meeting.

“Mr Edkins suggested that as we were now prepared to make sensible and amicable arrangements in Federal matters it would be wise to withhold our full hand until we had used it as a lever with the Nationalists on State matters.

“Mr. Garbutt and Mr. Newbery—That the matter of giving publicity to the resolutions of this meeting be left to the discretion of the sub-committee already appointed.”

They were prepared to let some of it out in dribs and drabs or, in other words, to maintain the policy laid down so carefully by Mr. Edkins that it is not advisable to place these things in the front window—

MR. KING: Something like the communistic policy.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Because the small man would not favour them. Yet here we have a definite declaration by no less a person than Mr. Garbutt at a meeting of the Executive Council of the Country party that they intend to pay back half a million of money to the squatters of Queensland if they obtain office.

MR. KING: Who says we are pledged to make a refund?

MR. FLETCHER: That is quite wrong.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If they are going to spend that money in that way, there can be no expenditure on public buildings and other necessary works of that kind.

MR. KING: Where does it say that?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is quite evident. I am justified in saying that they have one policy, which they devise as tactfully as possible and put before the country at election times; but, sitting in what they call a secret caucus, they come to certain other decisions. They pledge men to refund certain moneys, which have been properly raised by this Government—

MR. J. JONES: Not properly raised.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: By cutting out such expenditure as is required on public buildings. Some of the revenue spent under this vote comes from that legislation which hon. members call repudiatory [12.30 p.m.] legislation; consequently, if that money is handed back, it means that it will not be available for purposes such as public buildings.

MR. FLETCHER: That is quite wrong.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No doubt hon. members opposite would give these people who support them politically and financially an extension of leases under very advantageous terms. One can easily understand how parties opposite raise their large funds. There is some other interesting matter in this report.

MR. MOORE: Ask the Committee to allow you to put the lot in “Hansard.”

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HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That would be a good idea. There is an interesting portion in connection with the Queensland Political Institute.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: What has this to do with the vote?

THE TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the Minister to connect his remarks with the vote.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am showing that certain revenues are raised by this Government from certain sources. Those revenues are expended on various public purposes, and a portion of those revenues is devoted to the Department of Public Works.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: Loan moneys.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: We are dealing with revenue. A certain portion is allocated to this department to carry on necessary repairs and additions to schools and other buildings.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: Very weak.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If the proposals of the organisation behind hon. members opposite were adopted, that revenue would not be available.

MR. ELPHINSTONE: Very plausible.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If half a million pounds were given back to a few squatters, it would not be available for the general purposes of the Government.

MR. KING: Where did you get that from?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: This paragraph respecting the Queensland Political Institute, to which I was referring, reads—

“The chairman said these men were connected with the National Democratic Council as a Speakers’ and Debating Society, and they broke away over the treatment given Mr. Elphinstone by the Nationalists. They were now entirely independent of the National Democratic Council.”

MR. ELPHINSTONE: It would save time if you had the whole of it put into “Hansard.”

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It goes on—

“Mr. Garbutt said they had in New Zealand a Welfare League, and dealt in economics and history, and wrote articles of great value, but these people were apparently purely political and might turn their strength against us at any time.

“Mr. Edkins said a deputation from the institute had called on him, and he thought they were not so much a political force as a debating and speaking force, and he thought they might be useful.

“Mr. Gay said very often in distant electorates they had difficulty in getting speakers, and a body of men like this would be of great help to us and was worth encouraging.

“Mr. Austin said he was totally opposed to having anything to do with this institute, although he agreed with Mr. Gay that we wanted more good speakers. Of these we had plenty in the country if they were given a chance.

“Mr. Green said a similar letter was sent to the Parliamentary Country party, but was not looked on with great favour, but as they did not like to turn them down flat, a friendly letter had been written suggesting that they would

accept their help as speakers, and would be glad to address their meetings occasionally on political matters.

"Mr. Batcheler said it was only a little more propaganda to undermine this organisation—he did not believe in professional speakers at election time, and would suggest we reply that we cannot consider their proposal.

"Mr. Newbery said city speakers would not get very far on country matters.

"Mr. Green and Mr. Hives—That a courteous reply be sent wishing them well, and that we will be glad to give them all information and assistance in regard to our Country party policy and outlook.—Carried."

Mr. MORGAN: What is wrong with that?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: This Executive Council meeting of the Queensland Country party then discussed the Federal elections, and a motion, lauding the Nationalist Prime Minister of Australia and his Government, was moved—

"Mr. Batcheler opposed the motion on the ground that the proper industrial bodies had already passed resolutions appreciating the benefits conferred. It was not a matter of this political body unless it were intended to signify that we surrendered our Country party policy and proposed to support Mr. Hughes.

"Mr. Austin said he totally and absolutely disagreed with the motion. Mr. Hughes had covered us with abuse in his recent tour of Queensland. To embrace Mr. Hughes would be to destroy the Country party edifice they had built up.

"Mr. Hives and Mr. Gay agreed with the idea of thanking Mr. Hughes for what he had done. There was no promise involved of supporting him in the future.

"Mr. Newbery said Mr. Hughes had used every abusive epithet in his vocabulary in his tirade against the Country party while in Queensland, and he was not going to agree to lick his boots. The motion was finally amended to include the Federal Country party, and was carried."

A resolution was carried, showing the definite connection between the moneyed interests and the parties sitting opposite. Under the heading, "No Opposition to Sitting Members," the report states—

"Mr. Garbutt said he proposed to move—'That to give practical effect to the thanks just recorded, this Council decide not to oppose any Nationalist sitting member, either Representative or Senate.' Dr. Earle Page had made a very bad impression in the North, and they concluded that he was actually hostile to the sugar industry. . . . He would, of course, follow this resolution with a corollary one, that our Country party sitting members must not be opposed.

"Mr. Edkins said he strongly supported the motion. It was a certainty that there must be some arrangement with the Nationalists if we were ever to get control in Queensland. The Nationalists long ago were prepared to give the Country party the leadership

and two-thirds of the Cabinet. If this had been accepted we would have been in power to-day. We can do it now and get our own Country party policy into force in Queensland. We could get this in no other way."

Further on the report continues as follows:—

"Mr. Batcheler said either they were a Country party or they were not a Country party. If they were, these people expected them to run candidates like any other party. If they were not, then it was time people understood that they were only Nationalists after all."

The whole report is very interesting. I am prepared to adopt the suggestion of the leader of the Opposition, and ask that the whole document be put into "Hansard." Does the hon. gentleman desire the whole document to go into "Han-ard"?

Mr. VOWLES: No.

Mr. MORGAN: Who stole the document?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: While the party opposite condemn the Government for extravagance on the one hand, on the other hand they blame us for not spending sufficient money for certain purposes. With the resources which have been available, we have been able to do very good things for the public purposes of this State; we have been able to build a large number of schools, and put others in necessary repair. It will be a bad thing for this State if hon. members opposite are allowed to adopt their policy and give advantages to the friends who support them outside. One or two other matters were raised by hon. members opposite, but I will deal with them later.

Mr. PETRIE (*Toombul*): Up to a certain point we listened with interest to the speech of the Minister, but I think it is to be regretted that the time of this Committee has been wasted by his references to the time-worn subject of the delegation, and his introduction of some report which he has got hold of dealing with a secret junta for raising money for a particular purpose. We have only a certain number of days for dealing with the Estimates. We have already wasted a good deal of time and will not be able to get on to some of the Estimates which we are anxious to debate.

Mr. COLLINS: Why don't you sit down then?

Mr. PETRIE: It was very much out of place and quite unprecedented for the Minister to introduce matters of that nature. I belong to the Nationalist party, and I am not ashamed of anything we have done.

I notice that in the item "General Repairs, Painting, Improvements, and Incidentals" there is an increase of £3,000. A great amount of money has been spent in connection with Government buildings throughout the State. I have not been able to obtain a schedule showing the cost, but, when you consider the number, it must be an enormous amount. £30,000 is a very small amount for general repairs. A lot of Government buildings are in a very bad state of repair and need attention. They have been neglected for some years. The Minister knows that the longer you leave buildings—especially wooden buildings—without painting or repairs, the greater is the cost when they are being put in order.

I am not going into the question of day labour versus contract. I think every member

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knows my opinions on that subject. I have already stated that there is something to be said for and against the day-labour and contract system. Hon. members opposite are always eager to bring up what an ex-Minister did and said in connection with day labour in the construction of certain railways. At that time there was a Liberal Government in power and industrial conditions were not as they are now. The Chief Engineer for Railways was given a free hand to employ the best men he could get and give the best wages, and no doubt the work was done satisfactorily.

The Minister led me to believe that certain hon. members on this side had insinuated certain things against officers of his department. I want to make the matter clear. I am aware that in the Department of Public Works we have the most competent officers from the Under Secretary down, and I believe that they carry out their work very satisfactorily. They have under them the best tradesmen available to-day. I have never been a believer in low wages. It is a good thing to pay good wages if a man gives a fair day's work for a fair day's pay. My experience has been that the better you handle men, the better they will treat you. The Minister has made certain innovations in his department, which I believe will be of some benefit, and, perhaps, now are disclosing benefits in that direction. We have heard a lot said about the day-labour system. We are not against that system so much, but we maintain that we have decent honest contractors in Brisbane who will give decent work. They have to pay heavy taxation. The Government have prevented them from obtaining any Government work because of the introduction of the day-labour system. The Liberal Government, when they were in power, were responsible for starting the day-labour system in a small way. This Government have placed the whole of the work under that system. The contractors contribute very largely towards the revenue of the State, and they really should be given some chance of occasionally obtaining some work from the Government. Mr. Arthur Midson, who is now constructing the foundations for the new Town Hall, is one of the ablest, most respectable, and most competent contractors that we have in Queensland. I understand that his contract was something like £30,000 below the architect's estimate.

At 12.45 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The contractor will get the advantage of falling costs on that job.

Mr. PETRIE: The department make their estimates all right; I am not questioning that. When the Government carry out their work and they have one item which has considerably increased in price, without in any way interfering with the work they decide to eliminate that item from the work. A contractor cannot do that. Take the case of the new State Insurance Building. The contractor was almost ruined on that job. The Government can cut out certain increases in expenditure and thus bring the cost of the work within the estimate.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: If, after the estimate was made, the Government found that they could eliminate any increased expenditure, they would be foolish if they did not do so.

[Mr. Petrie.

Mr. PETRIE: Yes; but a contractor is not allowed to do that. He has to keep to the plans and specifications. All details should be furnished with every plan when tenders are called.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is always a certain amount of elasticity in connection with every tender.

Mr. PETRIE: The Government had a better chance of dealing with that matter than an ordinary contractor.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: An inspector of works would be very foolish if he took up a rigid attitude on everything. There must be a certain amount of elasticity in all matters of that nature.

Mr. PETRIE: The cost of the construction of the new Trades Hall exceeded the estimate by about 100 per cent.

Mr. WILSON: Because the building was held up by the hon. member for Toowong and other hon. members.

Mr. MAXWELL: Hear, hear! I am proud of it.

Mr. PETRIE: With all due deference to the hon. member for Fortitude Valley, I do not think that was the real cause of the increased cost of that building. The trade unions are all right; but, unfortunately, there are men who adopt the "go slow" policy. Those men have been getting into the unions and have been trying to upset everything. Even the Government have had to contend with men of that kind.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Speaking generally, we get as good service from our men as is obtained from men outside.

Mr. PETRIE: The hon. gentleman has good men in his department. He is wise in not having men who adopt the "go slow" policy. If he finds that the men are not doing their work, he gets rid of them—that is, if the unions will allow him. I have no doubt that he does the best under all the circumstances. I would not like to think that the Minister or his officers were dominated by an outside junta. An effort has been made to dominate them. Perhaps some work under the day-labour system can be performed better than under the contract system. The hon. member for Herbert made some interjection with reference to the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board. We know that the contractors who did that work went "bung," if I may be allowed to use that expression. We also know that a lot of work was done by the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board under the day-labour system, and that the board afterwards had to abandon that system. There are certain works that can probably be better done by day labour than by contract. The hon. member for Murilla was quite right in bringing up the question of the construction of schools in remote districts, and I was pleased that the Minister gave a very favourable reply to the suggestions the hon. member made. There can be no doubt that it is wrong in principle to send men from large centres long distances, pay their railway fares, and board and lodging, when local men can be obtained to do the work. I know that sometimes you cannot get the tradesmen that you want. I am not going to cast any reflection on our workmen. We have in Queensland to-day as good tradesmen in all trades as you can get anywhere, but I

know in my line of business there is a difficulty in always getting the class of tradesman that we require.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The boys are not given the training that they previously had.

Mr. PETRIE: A little more encouragement has been given lately. I am glad to say that in my line of business things have altered lately. We now have two small boys.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The training of sufficient apprentices for the various trades is a very serious problem.

Mr. PETRIE: I know it is. I agree with what the Minister said regarding too many of the pupils at the technical colleges going in for typing and that kind of thing. I would like to know how many apprentices are being trained in the Department of Public Works.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have apprentices in all branches.

Mr. PETRIE: If we continue in the way we have been going on in the last few years, the time will come when we shall have no tradesmen at all, and we shall have to import them from other countries.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have about twenty apprentices at the present time in the department.

Mr. PETRIE: I am very glad to hear that. When I was in the building trade we had apprentices in almost every branch, and I am glad to say that those apprentices have turned out first-class tradesmen. One boy that we brought up as a bricklayer went home with his father and got a job as a journeyman, but he was not three months there before he was put in charge of a branch office in London. He is doing well and writes me occasionally. That proves that we can turn out just as good tradesmen here as they can in other parts of the world.

As there are so many public buildings that are in a neglected state, it is a pity that there is not some sort of a sinking fund that the Government could fall back on. Very often these buildings are left to the very last moment.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Victoria, a few years ago, had to float a special loan to make up their arrears of work.

Mr. PETRIE: That was regrettable. Take the present Treasury Buildings. I am not blaming this Government, but it would have been far better if the Treasury Buildings could have been completed before some of the other buildings, such as the Executive Buildings and the State Insurance Office Buildings, were erected.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have that under consideration now.

Mr. PETRIE: I am glad to know that the Government are now paying very little in the way of rent, and I hope the time is not far distant when the Treasury Buildings will be completed. It is not doing them any good to allow them to remain in their present uncompleted state.

The Minister referred to the delegation and other things, and I would like to say that there are certain State enterprises that we could well have done without, and the money wasted on those enterprises could far better have been handed over to the Secretary for Public Works so that he might carry out additions to schools that are so much needed and other work necessary for the carrying on of the business of the State.

I do not wish to say anything further with regard to day labour, because I know it is the policy of the Government. I do not blame them for having adopted that policy, but I do think they should give those people who pay large sums in taxation an opportunity at times to tender for Government work. The hon. member for Burnett referred to this matter and said that, if a trial were given, an office estimate could be made up and put into the tender box at the same time as other tenders, and all tenders could be opened in the presence of responsible officers, and if the departmental estimate was below the contractors' prices, then there would be nothing more to say. That was done in connection with the foundations of the present State Insurance Office Buildings. The hon. member for Bulimba was Secretary for Public Works at the time, and a deputation waited on him and he agreed to adopt that system. The result was that one contractor was below the office estimate, and he got the work.

Mr. SWAYNE (*Mirani*): The hon. member for Enoggera, when speaking this morning, mooted rather an important point of policy—the proportion of expenditure in regard to public buildings which should be charged against revenue and against loan respectively. The Minister stated in reply that that was a matter of policy. It would

be well to consider whether it is [2 p.m.] a fair thing to those who come afterwards to debit to loan charges for buildings, the life of which, as the Minister pointed out, is only forty years. The Minister mentioned that that period was the extreme life of wooden buildings. The depreciation of a wooden building is very great, and I take it that, by the time such a building is forty years old, the cost of maintenance will have added considerably to its first charge. As illustrating the difference in the attitude of previous Administrations and the present Administration on that point, I would like to compare the figures given in the Auditor-General's report for 1915 with those in the Estimates for this year. I find from the Auditor-General's report of 1915 that the Denham Government spent from loan £77,383, and from revenue £148,560; or, in other words, roughly twice as much from revenue as from loan. It will be remembered that, when this Government took office, they had in their first financial year a surplus of £37,000. The Auditor-General, in referring to that surplus, said that had it not been for their change from their predecessors' system of charging temporary wooden buildings to revenue, that surplus would have been a deficit. It is rather interesting to consider how much larger this Government's growing deficits would have been, and how much less their nominal surpluses would have been if the system of their predecessors had been carried out. As illustrating the difference in practice, take the vote we are now discussing. We find that from loan the Government intend to spend £280,575, while from revenue in the vote which we are now discussing the expenditure is only £95,000. In other words, the expenditure by this Government from loan is nearly three times as much as from revenue. I think that the electors should consider the wisdom and justice of piling up these charges for temporary buildings on loan account, which will have to be borne by those who come afterwards when the work itself has become value-

Mr. Swayne.]

less. The Minister, in his reply, read out the minutes of the Primary Producers' Union and argued that, if the policy there mentioned was carried out, there would be very little money left to be spent on public buildings. I would like to read something in illustration of the new policy which the party opposite have in view, and I would ask the Minister how much money there would be for public buildings if the views of his friends that I am going to read were carried into effect.

At 2.7 p.m.,

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

Mr. SWAYNE: I have here a report of the Interstate Labour Conference held in the Sydney Trades Hall on 19th June, 1919. The Minister spoke for half an hour, but I do not intend to go into this at any length. I find that the official Labour declaration, as contained in the "Labour News," the official organ of the Labour party, reads—

"Whether abused or not, the system of Bolshevism . . . has established itself for good in Russia, and, as a new Evangel, must spread thence throughout the world.

"Bolshevism is democracy unadulterated. Its importance to Australia is part of the importance of the wide world. No whole-souled democrat can look askance at it."

That is the opinion of the Labour organisation. I ask the public under which system public buildings—under the system represented by the Primary Producer's Union policy is the more money likely to be spent for or under the system advocated at the Labour Conference in Sydney in 1919; which is really "Red Bolshevism." So far as the minutes read by the Minister are concerned, he made reference to an act of repudiation by the Government in connection with pastoral leases. The pastoral lessees, no doubt, were treated unjustly, although I do not for one moment concur with the utterances quoted by the Minister, that there is a possibility of paying back £500,000. I do not think anyone contemplates that for a moment, because it could not be done; but, if any future Government have it in their power in some way to make good to those people the losses that they have incurred through the political robbery of this Administration, then it would only be an act of common justice to make good in some way or another. Coming more immediately to the subject under discussion as to whether the taxpayer would not get more value for the money spent if another system for carrying out the work was brought into effect, I think that piecework should be given a trial. This is a question that I have discussed on this vote for the past five years. I am sure that if the suggestion I made five years ago had been carried into effect, there would have been a considerable saving of money to the electors of Queensland. The Minister quoted one or two isolated cases which apparently show there is something to be said for the day-labour system. We do not contend for one moment that any system is entirely wrong, or that any other system is entirely good. We have to take every case on its merits. When the hon. member for Toowong was speaking he mentioned a case where a school erected under the day-labour system cost £102 per square, while another building in the same locality,

built under contract, but under the same supervision, cost only £58 per square. There is a small school in the Mirani electorate which requires a veranda in order to protect it on the weather side. The estimate given to construct that veranda under the day-labour system was over £90. As the veranda was only 21 feet by 8 feet, it was considered that the estimate was out of all proportion, and the work was not done. It has not been done yet, and the school is not protected in wet weather from the rain. At the same time I had a veranda built here in Brisbane, 47 feet long and 9 feet wide with a room on it, for £92, or somewhere about the estimated cost of this other veranda 21 feet by 8 feet. Only recently I supplied figures showing the cost of jobs—I think in the electorate of the hon. member for Fassifern. The closing in underneath of a school residence cost £40, although the estimate was £9 17s., and it was merely a question of nailing a few battens on to the posts in the front of the building, in which I think about 400 nails were used. That is the sort of thing that is going on.

I think one of the first questions I asked this session was of the Secretary for Public Works, as to the amount of money that had been spent on public buildings since the present Government took office in 1915. The reply was £1,294,611; and I feel safe in saying that, if the three systems of contract, day-labour, and piecework had been in operation where each was convenient or desirable, that amount would have been largely reduced, and in the bush districts many children would be receiving education who now have to go without it, because year by year the vote is expended before all the schools required can be erected. In the same way, we know that far too many children have to receive tuition in unsatisfactory buildings, to the prejudice of their health; and, had that large sum of money been judiciously and properly expended, it would have given them proper conditions—sufficient space to breathe in, proper protection from the weather, and so on.

The action of past Governments in initiating on railway construction the day-labour system has been mentioned. I would like to point out that the system as initiated by them was very different from what it is to-day, because the practice of letting certain jobs by piecework was followed in certain circumstances; for instance, in some of the sidings and small earthworks.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You had the "butty gang" system.

Mr. SWAYNE: It was effective, and many culverts and small bridges also were made by that method. The abolition of that system is partly the reason why the cost to-day is so heavy. The cost of railway construction has reached the appalling figure of something like £14,000 a mile and for a light agricultural line over £9,000. Another reason why the evils of the day-labour system have been manifested under the present Government is that all control over the employees is lost. At the present time the foreman or ganger is merely a check timekeeper. If he remonstrates with one of the gang—he belongs to the same union—he gets a very rough time. Although there are many good men, there is a small element among the men that always desires to go slow. Unfortunately, that element has far greater influence than its numbers warrant. Some people fear that

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that element is growing. The Minister admitted that it is not a desirable element. If it is growing, it is due distinctly to the encouragement given to it and the weakness exhibited in dealing with it by the present Administration.

Mr. BULCOCK (*Burcoo*): The hon. member for Mirani had something to say about the "go slow" policy—which, he claimed, is advocated by individuals who wield an influence altogether out of proportion to their number. I have had as much industrial experience amongst unionists and organised labour as most men in this House. During the whole of the time that I have been associated actively with the biggest union in Queensland—the Australian Workers' Union—I have never had any trouble arising out of the "go slow" policy. The work under my jurisdiction embraced railways, shearing sheds, pastoral work, municipal work, and various other types of work. I have never been called on to adjudicate in connection with, or to try and settle, a strike or industrial trouble arising out of the application of the "go slow" policy. That proves that the workers generally are not prepared to espouse that policy unless there is very grave cause for it. Other hon. members on this side who have had industrial experience along the same lines will, I feel sure, indicate that their experiences have been similar to mine, and will say that the average individual is prepared to do the fair and honest thing, so far as his abilities permit him, in any work in which he may be employed.

There has been a good deal of discussion regarding the relative merits of contract work, piecework, and the day-labour system. Listening to the debate to-day, and comparing it with that of last year and the year before, it appears to me that the Opposition have changed their ground of attack. In previous years they attacked the principle of the day-labour system and asked for a reversion to the old system of contract work. To-day we find that certain members steer what might be termed—at least from their point of view—an intermediate course, and advocate the application of piecework—which, in effect, makes every individual a contractor in the work he is called on to perform. While we may argue the moral merits of either system, the practical application leads me to believe that the day-labour system as we have it, in spite of its faults—which, in the main are inseparable from any system—has justified its existence. I would be loath to see this Government depart from that principle. There is a humanitarian aspect and a practical aspect to the case. We have to consider the practical application of any theories we may advance or any system which we may superimpose upon our social or industrial life. Out of their own mouths hon. members opposite stand condemned. In 1912, the then Secretary for Railways, Mr. Paget, spoke on this question of the relative ability of the community generally to carry the contract system on the one hand or the day-labour system on the other hand. He was of the opinion that the circumstances justified the application of the day-labour system.

This statement was made at the time when, in the main, the contract system was definitely favoured by leaders of political thought.

According to "Hansard" for 1912 the then Secretary for Railways, Mr. Paget, stated—

"I am handing in for the information of hon. members a return prepared in 1897, for the then chief engineer, of all railways built by him under contract between 1881 and 1895—

The total expenditure was £5,491,720, the mileage 1,144.94, and the average cost per mile £4,795.

This return includes all railways built between 1881 and 1895 in the Southern division, a few in the Central division, but none in the Northern division, as the Central division was only taken over by the then chief engineer in 1887, and the Northern division in 1892.

A return has been prepared by me of all railways built by day labour since its inception in 1900 up to 1911.

The total expenditure was £3,415,249, the mileage 1,144.59, and the average cost per mile £2,982.

"Opposition Members: Hear, hear!"

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The fact that the mileage in both returns are practically the same is merely a coincidence.

This return includes all the railways built throughout the State during these years.

The total difference in expenditure is £2,076,471 in favour of day labour.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kirwan: I hope the Liberals in the Federal Parliament will read this.

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS: The average cost per mile is £1,814 per mile in favour of day labour.

Opposition Members: Hear, hear!"

I do not think that circumstances have justified any alteration of the opinion laid down in this Chamber at that time. I do not think it can be said that that experience has not borne the test of time. It might be said that the statement made by the then Secretary for Railways has been proved fallacious in the light of later experience. I intend to quote from the Sydney "Bulletin" and I think it will be agreed that the article is a late contribution to this debate. The article is headed "Too much Kirkpatrick." In dealing with the question of construction of war service homes it states—

"Had the original intention of utilising the State building departments been followed, the scheme, instead of a gorgeous failure, might have been a success. At all events, the administration would have been in the hands of men familiar with all the details of an essentially local job."

We all know the history of the scandal surrounding the building of war service homes, and, as time goes on, more scandals are being revealed. The Committee recently appointed to inquire into the question of the building of war service homes quite clearly and definitely stated that the homes which had cost £15,500,000 were only worth £8,250,000. That seems to indicate that the difference between £8,250,000 and £15,500,000 represents waste. That is an activity controlled by the Federal Government under the contract system; yet hon. members opposite have the audacity to come

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into this Chamber and charge hon. members on this side with waste and extravagance. Pursuing this argument a little bit further, it is shown that the architect who was responsible for exercising a sort of benevolent supervision over the erection of these dwellings got £27 10s. for every dwelling that was erected under his supervision. That £27 10s. was taken from the pockets of the unfortunate individuals for whom those homes were being built, and it is another example of the wrongful expenditure of money—money that might well have been conserved to the people for whom the homes were being built and who could ill afford to part with it. It is somewhat of a scandal to think that the gentleman supervising the building of these houses should draw a sum of £48,890, or 3½ per cent. on the cost of each dwelling, for his supervision. That is one of the evils incidental to the contract system, and, if the contract system lends itself to that sort of thing, I take it that the public of Queensland and the public of every part of the Commonwealth are going to be up in arms against a system that so materially adds to the capital cost of a dwelling, while the purchaser of the dwelling gets no additional benefit. The "Bulletin" article further states—

"Mr. Matthews, Federal member, asked—

Why is the public called upon to pay a firm of private architects thousands of pounds for the preparation of plans and the taking out of quantities that are already available in the Works Department? Beyond an ineffectual statement 'that the question pertained only to the management of the Bank,' the Treasurer had no reply."

We have never been able to get any satisfactory explanation so far as these war service homes are concerned; but the people generally are agreed that the bungling of the Federal department in connection with these contracts has materially added to the total cost of the buildings without adding to their value, and it is abundantly proved that the soldiers' homes should have been constructed at a much lower cost than they were. That is an indication of how these men, for whom a new heaven was to be created, have been penalised by the Federal Government jobbing out the work so that their friends could get a substantial benefit.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: They have asked the States to take over control.

MR. BULCOCK: It is satisfactorily established now that, had the States been called upon to handle these things, they would have handled them far more satisfactorily than did the Federal Government under the contract system, and the proof of that is that at the present time the Federal Government are negotiating with the Secretary for Public Works to take them over and build the war service homes under the day-labour system.

MR. KING: No—under contract.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Complete control over the management of them.

MR. BULCOCK: It is complete control, and if complete control means anything, it means the application of our policy. Let us go further, and see what that Commission had to say in regard to the war service homes. I am quoting now from "Smith's

Weekly" for 12th August, 1922, which has an article headed—

"ANOTHER WAR SERVICE HOME SCANDAL.
"AN INQUIRY THAT STOPPED WITH A SHUDDER.

"Mysterious Green Bros., and Their Sudden Rise to Affluence.

"Ruthless Investigation Necessary"

The article says—

"The committee refers in its report to the contract as revealing an amazing lack of business capacity on the part of the Commissioner and his officers. It conceded that 'the circumstances of E. A. and B. Green justified extreme care with the Commission's negotiations, but even ordinary business methods appear to have been neglected.' It admits that 'the Commission allowed itself to be involved in heavy commitments by Green for huge quantities of timber, and then paid Green brokerage on the transaction.' Inferior joinery, it finds, was accepted from Green, and little notice taken of condemnatory reports thereon by subordinate officers. Arthur Green, it seemed, dominated the situation throughout. Green, the committee learned, had left for Europe, and no one knew when he would return."

You would have to go a long way before you could find a more severe indictment of the contract system than that, hinting as it does

that certain friends and associates [2.30 p.m.] of the powers that be get big perquisites and dividends for their association with certain classes of work. We find, amongst other things, that these things were done under the precious contract system which hon. members opposite are trying to bolster up. We find, first, that a sum of £10,000 was advanced to the Green Brothers by the Commission without interest—

"(1) Advanced the Greens £10,000 without interest—£4,000 to pay off the overdraft and £6,000 to be expended in new plant.

"(2) Contracted for the supply of joinery and mouldings for 2,500 houses per annum for a period of five years, at a price 17½ per cent. below the current price list; and

"(3) Undertook to supply the contractor annually with 3,000,000 feet of timber at specified rates.

"POINTS TO BE CLEARED UP.

"Since the Public Accounts Committee has said its last word about this incomprehensible affair, the Minister for Repatriation should ascertain—

Who introduced Green to the Commissioner?

Who authorised the advance of £10,000, and whether the advance has been repaid?

The total amount paid to the Greens for brokerage.

The total amount expended in joinery for houses actually built.

The total value of joinery passed into stone, and what has become of it.

When Mr. Arthur Cephas Secomb comes into the War Service Homes transaction, and whether he or Arthur Green is the man to be reckoned with."

[Mr. Bulcock.

No finality, so far as I know, has been reached in this matter, and I say that no finality will ever be reached.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Every soldier's house built in Queensland is about £150 over-capitalised.

Mr. BULCOCK: The Federal Government allow things to remain in a vague and indefinite form, without giving the public any idea as to the serious want of ordinary capacity that was displayed in the erection of the war service homes. It might be interesting to come a little bit closer home in this connection. I have here the "Daily Standard" of 22nd July last, from which I quote this extract—

"PROVED THE BETTER.

"DAY LABOUR'S SUCCESS.

"*Engineer's Testimony.*

"Results of Experience.

"I used to be in favour of the contract system, especially where extensive works are concerned. I am convinced, however, that the Water and Sewerage Board has successfully demonstrated that big works can be carried out more satisfactorily and certainly more economically by day labour than by contract."

This is a statement in connection with the Brisbane water and sewerage scheme by a well-known civil engineer, who states that he is still a believer in having tenders called for work; but, from the knowledge he has gleaned of the board's experiences, he thinks that it would be absurd for him to suggest that any contractor could carry out the work as economically and as well as the board under its existing arrangements. That is an expression of opinion from a gentleman well qualified to give it. Suppose, for the sake of argument, that the Water and Sewerage Board had decided to carry the work out under the contract system, it would have meant the closing down of the work while tenders were being called for and contracts finally arranged. If those who stood for the contract system had had their way, 400 or 500 men would have been thrown out of work for perhaps three or four months, instead of which, with the day-labour system, there has been continuity of employment and satisfaction amongst the workers employed on the undertaking.

Tracing the history of the day-labour system as against the contract system, one must arrive at some very definite conclusions. The conclusion I have come to is that the contract system readily lends itself to the exploitation of the public interests. Certain individuals who are fortunate enough to get these contracts are frequently enabled to make big sums of money out of the contracts. I know that there is another side of the question which is often pointed out—that certain contractors for the Water and Sewerage Board have not come out of their contracts satisfactorily, and that the board, as a consequence of that, have had to carry out the work by day labour, and it is being brought to a satisfactory termination.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It will cost nearly double the amount of the first estimate, all the same.

Mr. BULCOCK: The hon. member must admit that the contractors who supplied the first estimates were unable to carry on the work, proving that their estimates were not

satisfactory or based on the true cost of the work they had to do.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: It was owing to the unforeseen difficulties which were encountered.

Mr. BULCOCK: So far as the financial side of the question is concerned, I think there is indubitable proof that the day-labour system is in the interests of the people of Queensland generally, and that the contract system favours the fortunate few. Looking at it from the humanitarian side, it is safe to assume that the individual who takes a contract desires to get as much profit out of his contract as he possibly can. The experience of the industrial world from the worker's point of view has been that there is always a very great measure of speeding up in connection with contract work. The day-labour system has done away with the speeding up to an extent that perhaps those who originally brought the system into being did not dream of. I am very pleased that the Minister has indicated his willingness to employ local labour, so far as it may be available, for work in Western and other isolated areas. I believe that is a step in the right direction. I, for one, was not happy in the thought that it might at times be considered necessary to take men over long distances in order to perform work in a given area. I am heartily in accord with the Minister when he says that, if local labour can be obtained for any job, it shall be given preference.

Mr. MORGAN: That was advocated by this side.

Mr. BULCOCK: The fact remains that it was this Government who put the system of employing local labour into operation.

Mr. MORGAN: No; it was in operation before this Government came into power, but it was changed.

Mr. BULCOCK: Speaking for the people in the West, I want to take the opportunity of thanking the Minister and the department for what has been done for certain schools in my electorate. I hold that the comfort of the children in Western towns should be just as much a matter for consideration as that of the children in town areas. The children in the bush do not always get the same opportunities as the children in the towns, and their lives are, in the main, barren and drab, because they have not got those associations which the children in the towns have. I think that the Minister has been sympathetic in his administration in this regard. When I have asked him to do things for the welfare and benefit of the children in regard to schools in my electorate I have always been received courteously and have been able to achieve, in the main, what I desire. The population in the West is growing rapidly, and I am happy to be able to say that the Department of Public Works has coped with the position by making additions to certain schools in the Barcoo, so that the children there may approximate to the same degree of comfort that the children in the towns have. I think it is a very excellent idea, when we are considering this question of expenditure in the Department of Public Works, for Ministers generally to see the conditions under which the Western people live. The Western people are not accustomed to complain or make demands that are not reasonable, fair, or equitable. Their demands are generally based on good

Mr. Bulcock.]

grounds and on a solid foundation; and, so far as my experience goes, these requests have been very fairly and decently met by the Secretary for Public Works, who has a keen appreciation of the disadvantages under which our Western children labour so far as endeavouring to get decent education is concerned.

Mr. KING (*Logan*): Before lunch we had a long speech from the Minister. The first part of his speech was very interesting, but the latter part was merely an infliction. I could not help thinking during the latter part of his speech of a certain quotation out of the comic opera "Mikado," in which one of the characters, "Pooh Bah," referring to an incident in the play, said that it was intended "merely as a corroborative statement intended to give an air of verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." That is what I thought about the latter part of the speech of the Minister in connection with the matters that he was bringing before the Committee.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It was a genuine document.

Mr. KING: I am not worrying a bit about the document. If it gave the Minister any amusement, and if it gave hon. members opposite any amusement, well and good. It certainly did hon. members on this side no harm.

Mr. W. COOPER: Then, why worry about it?

Mr. KING: We have no connection with it whatever. The Minister gave us "a bald and unconvincing narrative." I almost visualised the hon. gentleman in the guise of Ajax defying the lightning; of course, with his tongue in his cheek. I was reminded, as the words poured out of his mouth, of the quotation that he was "overcome by the exuberance of his own verbosity." Anyhow, I do not think that the latter part of his speech was of an instructive or creditable nature, although the first part was interesting.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It might not affect the Nationalists, but it affects the Country party.

Mr. KING: It does not affect the Nationalists in the slightest degree.

Mr. COLLINS: I thought it was a new chapter in "Revelations."

Mr. KING: The Minister, in the course of his speech, could not help trotting out that old wheeze, "the delegation." The way the hon. gentleman and hon. members on that side of the House flog that old delegation to death is really marvellous. It shows how fearfully barren of argument they must be when they refer to that old wheeze again and again. I call it an old wheeze, because it is on its last legs. In fact, it is as dead as Julius Cæsar, if not more so. It might have been some little use a couple of years ago, but the people of Queensland know full well the truth about the delegation, and I do not think that the hon. gentleman or any hon. members opposite who talk about the delegation are going to cut any ice.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. KING: To come down to more mundane matters, I would like to refer to the necessity for the establishment of a rural school at Beenleigh.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about an agricultural school?

[*Mr. Bulcock.*]

Mr. KING: No; you want to put one-third of the cost on to the local authorities. We prefer to have a rural school if it can be managed. A deputation waited on the Secretary for Public Instruction, and he was very courteous and sympathetic. I might say that we always get courtesy from that hon. gentleman. (Hear, hear!) I only hope that the Secretary for Public Instruction sent his views along to the Minister in charge of the Department of Public Works. If the Minister in charge of these Estimates wishes to immortalise himself, he has the opportunity of doing so by establishing a rural school at Beenleigh.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Or an agricultural school.

At 2.45 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. KING: Give us an agricultural school as well. We cannot have too many schools. The more schools we have the better.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I think that Beenleigh would be a good place for a rural school.

Mr. KING: I thank the Minister for that admission. The Secretary for Public Instruction told the deputation that he was favourable, and now we have the Minister in charge of the Department of Public Works saying that Beenleigh is a good place for the establishment of a rural school, so we can take it that it is almost as good as done. (Laughter.)

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: What about the necessary funds?

Mr. KING: The Minister can always find the necessary funds. If the Government make up their mind to establish a rural school at Beenleigh, it will soon be an established fact. I might refer to one little matter, although I suppose it is a question of working the parish pump. I have been very quiet during the passage of the Estimates, but I want to put in a word for my own electorate. (Hear, hear!) It was pleasing indeed to hear the hon. member for Barcoo get up and tell us how good the department has been to him. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to get up and acknowledge that the department had also been fairly good to me.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You did not do too badly last year.

Mr. KING: I suppose the hon. gentleman refers to the Dunellan State school. I am extremely obliged to the department and to the Minister for the improvements that have been carried out at that school. But it is a big school, and they are suffering under serious disabilities.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: That is so.

Mr. KING: I would like to ask the Minister to carry out further work at the Dunellan school. The additions, including the teacher's room, are all great improvements for which I have to thank the department and the Minister; but I understand they are not going to paint the old buildings. If they are not painted now, it will involve heavy expenditure later on. The palisade fencing fronting the road is also falling down, and I would like some provision to be made to repair it; otherwise, it will look neglected and be a bad advertisement for the Government. I would also like to draw the Minister's attention to the Alberton State school, 7 or 8 miles out of

Beenleigh. It was built on a low-lying piece of country. The school is 4 feet from the ground, and there is no playshed for the children and no shelter in the wet weather. In fact, in times of heavy dew the children get their feet wet when going to school, and also when playing about the ground. They get their socks wet and are liable to get tuberculosis and all sorts of complaints. I would ask the Minister to take that into very serious consideration. We have asked the department to raise the school to about 7 feet, and utilise the space underneath as a shelter from the weather. We do not ask for a playshed; we simply ask that the children may have some protection from the weather, instead of having to crowd into the school when it is wet.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will look into the matter.

Mr. KING: I am very much obliged for that assurance, and I am sure the Minister is going to carry it out. I do not wish to discuss the question of day labour as against contract, or other questions which are debated here year after year. We never get any further ahead. They are matters of principle, and no result can come from the debate because circumstances probably will not be altered until there is a change of Government, when other methods will be tried, and we can ascertain which system is the best and adopt it, whatever it is. No doubt advantages are to be gained from both methods. The thing is to carry out the work in the most economical and efficient way and as speedily as possible.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): I believe that there is something to be said in favour of both day labour and contract. I believe that human nature is such that either system requires a check. If we have only day labour, we are going to fail; if we have all contract, the same thing applies. My father was a contractor and I know something about such work, and, if the contract system were in vogue to check the cost of day-labour work, we would not have the school teacher's dwelling at Mooloolah costing £1,000.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You are only £380 out.

Mr. WARREN: I am not. I make the statement that the hon. member is wrong. One of the reasons why we have difficulty in getting buildings constructed and improvements made is that this system exists. One of the biggest men in the Labour party, the late Hon. John Storey, Premier of New South Wales, has admitted this. I want to quote his opinion, as given in "Hansard" in a speech delivered by the hon. member for Mirani—

"If the workers wanted to go on improving their position, they must strive for increased production, at the present critical state of things nationally, rather than commit the mistake of making production almost impossible by carrying out work very steadily. If piecework had to be adopted, the workers would find that the system was not dangerous, but that the evil lay in the wrongful application of it. If the workers were able to control it properly, he should say, as a tradesman, that their experience of piecework would incline them never to go back to the day-work again."

That was the opinion of a very honest and

conscientious man, for even his opponents acknowledge that he expressed what he thought.

I do not want to debate this question at any length. During the last couple of years I have had a good deal to do with the Minister in connection with the fruit industry and the management of the fruit pool, and I have found him to be a keen energetic business man, and I was very sorry to hear him read the minutes of the meeting which he quoted to-day. We have never concealed them in any way. We have simply allowed them to lie about on the table in our room; nevertheless they were never meant for the hon. gentleman's hands, and consequently in reading them he did what he ought not to have done. He published in this Chamber something he got in a way that was not right.

Mr. COLLINS: Did not all your generals when they were at war do the same thing?

Mr. WARREN: We ought not to be at war. We ought to be doing things rationally, and not act like heathens or fools. We are here in the best interests of the State, and I do not feel that I am at war with any hon. member on the other side. I want to meet him as a square, honest opponent. I interjected when the hon. member was speaking, "Another stolen document." I challenge the hon. member to say where he got that document.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We got it where the £3,500 came from.

Mr. WARREN: I would like to know where the £2,500 went to.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What £2,500?

Mr. WARREN: The £2,500 which the Premier offered the fruitgrowers to come into his scheme. That is what I am alluding to, because, if hon. members opposite want to talk about one swindle, I want to talk about the general swindle.

Mr. GLEDSON: Let us hear about that £2,500.

Mr. WARREN: I have repeated that so often that nobody on the other side in a responsible position would dare to take it up, because he knows that I would ask for an inquiry. I have done my part, and I do not want to repeat myself. If that document was not meant for the hon. gentleman, he has done a very mean thing in reading it here. If it was meant for him, there is really nothing in what he has said was done.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you repudiate anything that is stated in the document?

Mr. WARREN: I certainly do repudiate something that is said in the document.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: What do you think of Mr. Garbutt's statement that every member of the Northern Country party is pledged to refund the increased rents collected under the so-called "Repudiation Act?"

Mr. WARREN: I am not here to be catechised by the hon. gentleman. I am here to state what I consider is best for the country. Nobody on this side would ever dream about handing that money back as a bribe or a sop.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Townsville was at that meeting, and he never said anything.

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. WARREN: The hon. member for Townsville is quite able to look after himself. When we have to resort to these things we have not very much in our bag to help us at the next general election. Every item in that document has been published in the weekly or the daily Press.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: About getting money from the South for certain purposes?

Mr. WARREN: Is the Minister's statement from beginning to end a correct statement of facts? Nothing contained in that document was meant to be hidden; if the daily Press had been willing to publish the whole lot, it would have been published.

The only thing that concerns me in connection with this vote is, how much am I going to get for my schools, and, incidentally, how much is Queensland going to get for its schools? No one can say that our schools are being given fair treatment. I can take the hon. gentleman to some schools which have never had any paint since I have been the member for the district. Some hon. members on the other side say that they get everything they ask for. If they do, it is an absolute disgrace.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Nobody gets everything he asks for.

Mr. WARREN: Hon. members opposite have said that they get all that they ask for.

Mr. BRENNAN: No.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You can call for a return of the expenditure, if you like.

Mr. WARREN: I was thinking of doing that. It would be very interesting to know how the money is being spent. Probably the hon. gentleman was really surprised when he went into the matter himself. The hon. member for Normanby the session before last was one of the Labour members who said he was getting these things.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I will give you the figures now if you like.

Mr. WARREN: It took the hon. gentleman an hour and a-half to make his speech, and I hope he will allow me to have my few minutes. The hon. gentleman has increased the vote by £11,000. We could sink the whole of that amount in painting our schools. We should insist that our school children in the country should have the average comfort that they have in their homes. The miserable amount voted every year is to blame for the present condition, not the hon. gentlemen who are charged with administering the Department of Public Works or the Department of Public Instruction. Not 3 per cent. of the schools in the country have had a coat of paint during the seven years the Government have been in office. It is a recognised thing that in a country of this description a wooden building should be painted every three years.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Hardwood buildings keep in good repair when they are done every five years.

Mr. WARREN: The Government have been in power for seven years. An important school like the Woombye school has not had a coat of paint during that period. If it is necessary to paint buildings in the city, it surely is necessary to do the same in country districts. The Government at the present time are courting the country people, and it is time that they woke up to the

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necessity for doing something for the country schools. The miserable little open-air schools have been condemned by every doctor in every district in the country. They have given more pneumonia to the children than the troops had in England.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Do you mean the tent schools?

Mr. WARREN: Yes.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We are not building any more of those.

Mr. WARREN: When the Government find out that they are a failure, they should erect a better class of building. We have a little school at Elimbah in which there has been an enormous amount of sickness. There is a greater attendance at that school than its size warrants, and we have applied for additions. It is about time that schools of that description were done away with entirely. The walls should be boarded up to prevent the damage done by the cold winds blowing on to the children. The children play in the sun, get hot, and then go into school and sit down in their classes, where the cold sea breezes blow on them. It is unreasonable to ask children to sit in the cold. The department is waiting until it gets sufficient funds to build other schools in such cases as this. Regarding the life of a school, the hon. gentleman was quite right in saying that a building might last forty years, but he is not right in saying it is due to the work which is put into the building. The first necessity to ensure the life of a building is to have matured timber. Nobody would put up a rickety school. Some of the old provisional schools have been put up by the people themselves. The oldest school in Queensland was at one time a church. While things are as they are, we should raise our voices and object. The Government should double the amount put on the Estimates. The Minister knows that it would take £250,000 to catch up with the arrears of work. The Government should leave party matters out of this debate, and they should treat all the electorates of Queensland in the same way.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I want to congratulate the Minister on the excellent speech he delivered to-day. I consider the first part of his speech was very interesting indeed, and in my opinion the other part was more interesting. The last Book in the New Testament is called Revelations, and the revelations which we have had to-day, I am sure, were very interesting to hon. members opposite, and I am sure that, when the people in the country have an opportunity of reading them, they will find them very interesting, too. I have no reason to complain with regard to the public buildings in my electorate. I am satisfied that in the near future, owing to the rapid progress that will take place, we shall require a large expenditure of public money in that part of Queensland to keep pace with the development that will take place. I want to draw the attention of the Committee to some remarks made by hon. members opposite, and I intend to deal with the hon. member for Albert first. If I remember rightly, he said that it would take £10,000 to put the schools in his electorate in proper order.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I said to build them and put them in order.

Mr. COLLINS: When I heard the hon. gentleman make those remarks, I could not help carrying my mind back to the time when he sat on the Treasury benches as Home Secretary. He must have neglected his electorate then, if it is in the dilapidated state he says it is in now.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I attended to it all right. The present Government have neglected it.

Mr. COLLINS: The present Government have only been in power seven years, and during that time the hon. gentleman claims that his schools have got into such a dilapidated state.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: The population is growing.

Mr. COLLINS: The Government have been called an extravagant Government, and we have been told that we have received the greatest amount in revenue that has ever been received by any Government in Queensland. The population is growing, and there would be something wrong if we did not receive a greater amount of revenue. There would be something wrong if we did not have increased wealth production now as compared with 1914, when hon. gentlemen opposite occupied the Treasury benches. I hope that next year this vote will be considerably increased. I expect that under this Government we shall have an increase in the population in Queensland, more especially an increase in the native population. Assuming for the sake of argument that all schools in Queensland are in a similar condition to those mentioned by the hon. member for Albert, it would take £720,000 to put the schools in proper order if they are in that dilapidated condition.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: We have not even got the schools.

Mr. COLLINS: If the Government go to the London market in an endeavour to raise £720,000 for educational purposes alone, will the hon. member say that his friends will not interfere?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: If the hon. member will get his Government to act honourably, they will get the money.

Mr. COLLINS: We have always acted honourably. I am prepared to give £5 to any hospital in Queensland if anyone can prove that the Government passed any "Repudiation Act." I never mentioned in my speeches in my electorate that the Government passed a "Repudiation Act." I call all the Acts of Parliament by their correct name. Without reflecting on the Chair, if I were sitting in the chair and any hon. member referred to this Government having passed a "Repudiation Act," I would call him to account, and make him prove his case. There was never any Bill introduced into this Chamber by the name of "Repudiation Bill."

The hon. member for Toombul said that the money spent on State enterprises would have been better spent on State school buildings. What I want to see in our schools—I hope the Minister is listening—is an alteration in the curriculum, so that children may be given socialistic teaching, and when they grow up they will be able to manage the State enterprises and do their duty to the State. They should give their best to the State. I believe, with the Minister, that we must develop what he terms

a civic conscience. Men must be fit, and there is no better place to teach that than in our schools. They have a right to give their best to the State. In any work that they undertake to perform they should always give the very best that is in them. They ought to give better work to the State than they give to the private individual, because the people are the State, and the State is the people, or, at least, it should be. The hon. member for Mirani was "throwing off" about the day-labour system and the "go slow" policy. He is obsessed about going slow. I am not sure he is too fast himself. He sat on this side of the Chamber for a long time and did not seem to get on the Treasury benches.

Mr. MORGAN: Neither has the hon. member. (Laughter.)

Mr. COLLINS: Neither have I. I am quite willing to admit that. I knew what was coming. The hon. member for Murilla is in the same boat. He came into this House about the same time as I did, and has been here continuously, but he has never got on to the Treasury benches. The hon. member for Mirani said that the man who tries to do his duty gets a rough time. I do not believe that. When I worked in a mine, if anyone attempted to loaf upon us, we simply did our best to "boot" him out. We had to carry that burden upon our shoulders. The conditions are no different to-day. This continual decrying of our workmen is a disgrace to the men who do it. I am prepared to say that the Australian workmen, and the Queensland workmen in particular, are equal to the best in the world. I question very much if any man in any country in the world works as hard as the men in Queensland to-day in connection with our railway construction work and many other works. It is time we dropped the cry about "go slow." Assume, for the sake of argument, that we are going slow. We live in an age of machinery. In connection with some of our public works, the machinery that is used in the construction of those works is altogether out of date. I have seen men doing work that should be done in modern times by machinery. Machinery should to a large extent take the place of manual labour to-day. The Government should have everything right up to date. When one goes into the Government Printing Office to-day he stands, as it were, in the presence of the brains of man trying to overcome the forces of nature by harnessing up that machinery for the benefit of man. We should use up-to-date machinery in connection with all our State works, more especially in connection with railway construction. Some of the engineers employed on railway construction works want shaking up a bit. They are not as modern as they ought to be. It is no use blaming the men. You want to look at the top of the tree sometimes, and not always at the bottom. If the men are loafing, what are the men in charge doing? I remember on one occasion I was shown through the Mount Morgan mine by the underground manager, and he complained of the men. I said, "What is the use of blaming the men? What you want to do is to blame the man in charge." The men in charge should be held responsible. I have never stood, and never will stand, for the man who does not work. I believe it was St. Paul who said, "He that will not work, neither shall he eat."

Mr. Collins.]

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: That is contrary to what you are now saying.

Mr. COLLINS: You belong to the class that never works.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I belong to the same class as you.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member was born with a silver spoon in his mouth. At any rate, the Government are doing quite right in going on with their day-labour policy. There is no need for us to repeat our arguments year after year. I know that in the good old days, when I had to work under contractors on railway construction works, some of the work that was put in was nothing but scamp work. Instead of putting in the proper amount of cement, they used to put in as little cement as they could. That was illustrated on the Cairns Railway some years ago. When a tunnel collapsed there it was found that where there should have been 15 or 16 inches of concrete there were only a few inches of concrete. I am satisfied that the Government are doing very well in regard to buildings; but, of course, they must be prepared for a larger vote according to the growth of the State. If we are going to get up-to-date schools like the hon. member for Albert wants, there are only two ways of getting them—either by increasing the revenue or by obtaining loan money.

Mr. J. JONES: Raise the revenue.

Mr. COLLINS: The hon. member is always squealing because we did raise the revenue and because we taxed some of his households. That is the only way in which we can raise the revenue. We had a revelation by the Secretary for Public Works, which indicated that, if hon. members opposite get into power, they are going to refund £500,000 to their friends the pastoralists. (Interruption.) Will hon. members deny that? The hon. member for Kennedy is only a small mushroom as compared with the big mushrooms in the pastoral industry. He really does not count in the pastoral industry, and his share of that £500,000 will be very small indeed.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You do not know what you are talking about.

Mr. COLLINS: I do know what I am talking about, and I am not going to take any dictation from the hon. member for Pittsworth.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The State stations will not pay dividends for years.

Mr. COLLINS: Are all the pastoral properties cattle stations? Why don't you read the papers, and see the price wool fetched in the market the other day. There was an increase in values of 5 per cent. Hon. members opposite, in the event of their getting into power, propose to refund £500,000 to the pastoralists.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: No; we are going to make the State stations pay a dividend of £500,000. You fellows can't do that.

Mr. COLLINS: Look at what Mr. Fairbairn said in the Federal Parliament. He said that privately owned cattle stations are not paying. (Interruption.)

The CHAIRMAN: Order! Order!

Mr. COLLINS: I want to congratulate the Secretary for Public Works on his splendid speech this morning, and on the exposure he made in regard to a meeting of the Country party, because we now know them in

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their true colours, and we know where the money is coming from that is financing them.

Mr. MORGAN (*Murilla*): Earlier in the day the Secretary for Public Instruction made a very bitter attack upon myself for standing up for the rights of the children who live in the bush. I accept the challenge of the Secretary for Public Instruction, and wish to bring under his notice a case in my own electorate, and one which he can investigate if he has not already got the particulars. This is in respect of the Merawa school in the Goondiwindi district. This school was closed, and an application was made by the parents in the locality asking that the school be reopened and a teacher appointed. A letter was received from the Department of Public Instruction, signed by the Minister, stating that, if the parents would guarantee an average attendance of nine, he would reopen the school and furnish a teacher immediately. The necessary guarantee was entered into by the parents, and they sent along a list showing that there were thirteen children in that district who would attend the school. One child was over the age of fourteen, but that child would attend the school two or three years longer as its education had been neglected; two of the children would attain the age of five at Christmas; but there were thirteen children altogether who would have attended the school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You are talking about the enrolment.

Mr. MORGAN: I am talking about the thirteen children who would have been enrolled and would have attended the school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It does not mean anything of the sort.

Mr. MORGAN: At present there are thirteen children in the district who are not receiving education, and those thirteen children are prepared to go to school if the Minister will supply them with a teacher; but he has refused to supply them with a teacher. Does the hon. gentleman deny that?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: I do deny it.

At 3.26 p.m.,

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

Mr. MORGAN: Yet the hon. gentleman says that the children in the country are receiving education.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We have no control over one child, and two were under the age until Christmas, and one is outside the area. That reduces your thirteen to nine.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. gentleman is taking advantage of the fact that one child is over the age of fourteen. That child has received very little education, and is prepared to go to school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: We know nothing of that.

Mr. MORGAN: That child has been placed on the list, and the other two children are prepared to go to school although they have not reached the age of five years. In the towns children go to school before they reach the age of five years.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: No; only to the kindergarten schools.

Mr. MORGAN: They may not be placed on the roll, but they go to school before they reach the age of five.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is not the enrolment that we are dealing with.

Mr. MORGAN: The hon. member for Dalby tells me that one of his children went to school before the age of five, and some of my own children have gone to school before they were five. The Minister is only quibbling on the matter. The point is, that there are thirteen children there prepared to go to school, and the hon. gentleman endeavoured to make the Committee believe that wherever there are nine children he is prepared to establish a school. There are thirteen children at Merawa who are not getting any education at all, and the Minister turned them down. That is not the only case. There are other cases in my own electorate, but I admit that the attendance did not average nine, but in the country, owing to the distances the children have to travel, it is very difficult to get them to go to school.

Mr. BRENNAN: Are they not visited by an itinerant teacher?

Mr. MORGAN: No. In this case they were promised that they would be placed on the correspondence list; but that is no use unless the parents are prepared to take an interest in their education. There are thirteen children who are prepared to go to that school. The Minister [3.30 p.m.] asked the people if they would guarantee an attendance of nine children, and they wrote back and said they would guarantee that. They also pointed out that there was a good home available for the teacher within a mile and a-half of the school, but the Minister turned that case down. If the Minister gives it further consideration, I think he will be able to grant that school.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I have no criticism to make against this department in regard to my own parish pump. (Laughter.) I have been very successful in regard to my own electorate. Where schools were badly needed I have always found the department very sympathetic. When going through my electorate at the beginning of the year I found a school at Julia Creek which had been built for the accommodation of thirty children. The population is growing so much as to warrant a new school, and a report was made on the matter, and there was no difficulty in getting the new school established. That has been the experience all through the Burke electorate, probably because, as an hon. member suggests, they had a very progressive member.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. RIORDAN: The public buildings at Hughenden and Richmond are in need of repair owing to the white-ant menace. I pointed that out to the department, and some improvements have been made to the police court at Hughenden. I understand that the person who reported on the matter stated that the white ants had not eaten right through but were playing havoc with the building from the outside. I suppose that a careful examination was made by the department before the improvements were gone on with, but it would have been good business if a new building had been erected. In

places like Hughenden and Richmond where buildings are subject to the ravages of white ants it would be a good thing to have reinforced concrete buildings. I do not know whether anything has been done at Richmond lately, but the public buildings there need attention, and prompt action may save the department a good deal of money. We know that, when the white ants attacks a wooden building, it is not long before it begins to crumble to the ground. I would also point out to the Minister the necessity for supplying lockers to the different police quarters for the men to keep their clothes in, as, if they are allowed to hang on the walls, they get dirty and into a state of disrepair. It will not be a big expenditure, but it will be a very great convenience to those concerned, and will be much appreciated. The Opposition continually criticise the Works Department and cry out about the state of disrepair of some of the school buildings, but it must be remembered that the Government have only been in office for about seven years. Hon. members opposite sing one tune here, but they play a different tune altogether on the public platform. They charge the Government with wasteful expenditure. What was the experience of every district during the reign of the previous Government which was supported by hon. members opposite?

Hon. J. G. APPEL: Prosperity and progress.

Mr. RIORDAN: It was impossible for a Labour member to get a school erected in his district. This Government give more consideration. The schools in electorates of hon. members opposite should not be in such a state of disrepair, as it is only seven years since they left the Treasury benches. North Queensland was neglected in this regard by the previous Administration, and something should be done for districts in the far North before building new schools in and around the cities. I do not complain about the cities getting their fair share, but I complain of children in the country having to go 10 miles to school, while in Brisbane people have schools within a few hundred yards of their homes.

Hon. J. G. APPEL: I am with you.

Mr. RIORDAN: That is not one of the faults of this Administration; it is the fault of the Administrations which were supported by hon. members opposite which kow-towed to those who held the strings during their term of office. We can all be fair in this regard. The hon. member for Murrumba asked that the vote be doubled, but he will be the first, if the vote is doubled, to point out the extravagant expenditure of the Government. On almost every vote which has been discussed on these Estimates hon. members opposite have said they would be pleased if the vote was doubled. The only vote they did not say should be increased was the vote for "Outdoor Relief;" but before the close of the discussion on that vote, from the way they were talking, I thought that hon. members opposite were going to move for an increase, which would have had my support. I do not think that any district has reason to complain, in regard to the need for and condition of public buildings, of the attitude taken up by the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works. We all know the camouflage and smoke-screen that the Opposition try to pull over the Government. In one breath they

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condemn the Government for reckless expenditure, and in the next breath they ask for the vote to be doubled. I am one who will always stand behind the children getting the best schools and the best comfort that the Department of Public Works can give them. In all cases when I have approached the Department of Public Works for improvements and school facilities I have always received a sympathetic and practical answer from the Minister.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION (Hon. J. Huxham, *Buranda*): I would not have risen again but that the hon. member for Murilla made further remarks in connection with schools in his electorate, and I want to put the facts of the case before the Committee.

Mr. VOWLES: Wait until we get to the Estimates of your department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. gentleman knows that we will not get there, and I am not going to let this opportunity pass without making a reply.

Mr. VOWLES: You should discuss it when we are dealing with the Estimates of your department.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The hon. member for Murilla made a statement, and I am going to make a reply. I do not usually take up much time when I speak, but the hon. member for Murilla was given certain liberty to bring certain matters before this Committee, and I feel sure, Mr. Cooper, that you will give me the same liberty when making my reply. With regard to the Merawa school, which was closed on 22nd June last because there were only seven scholars attending the school, all the information has been supplied to the hon. member for Murilla. In the first place, they would not provide accommodation to the teacher who was there. When we supplied them with a teacher, they could not supply the average number of scholars to attend the school.

Mr. MORGAN: There are thirteen children there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There are not thirteen children there at all. The hon. member is inflating the number.

Mr. MORGAN: The numbers are on your list.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: The average attendance is not thirteen. One child is over the age, two are under the age, and one lives outside the 2½-mile boundary. Even suppose I allow the hon. gentleman three out of those four, that will still block him from getting the average of thirteen which is necessary. Our experience, even in the best-regulated school, is that not more than 80 per cent. of the children attend, so that will bring the attendance down to seven.

Mr. MORGAN: Did not the people guarantee an attendance of nine?

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Nothing of the sort. There is no guarantee at all.

Mr. MORGAN: Yes; they gave you that guarantee. You have a letter to that effect.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It is a mere statement; it is not a guarantee. I am going to give the departmental explanation. Regulation

13 provides for a minimum of twelve; and if we have a minimum of twelve, the cost will work out at £15 per child. If we had not closed the school at Merawa, then the cost would have been increased to £25 per child. The hon. member for Murilla complained about the school in East Brisbane, but I can tell him that the average cost per child in that school would be from £8 to £8 10s. per year. The hon. gentleman does not want to cut down the expenditure in my department, but he will not agree to anyone being taxed to provide sufficient money to pay for the schools; and yet, at the same time, he expects to get twice as much expenditure in the matter of schools.

Mr. MORGAN: There are thirteen children there, and you ought to give them a school.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: There is not an average of thirteen children. I think I have convinced the Committee that I have done a fair thing so far as the children attending that school are concerned.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*): We are getting away from the vote under discussion, and seem to be discussing the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Your own colleague started it.

Mr. VOWLES: It was replied to by the Minister, and the hon. member for Murilla replied to the defence put up by the Minister. The Secretary for Public Instruction told us that the average attendance at one school was 3.6, but he never told us that the average attendance at the Merawa school was thirteen. We know that at Merawa there are thirteen eligible pupils, and there is an average attendance of nine, or possibly ten. At any rate, we will deal with that when we get to the Estimates of the Department of Public Instruction, if we ever do get there. In this connection I was interested to hear the Secretary for Public Instruction tell us that we would not get there.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: You will not give me the chance.

Mr. VOWLES: You told us this morning that you would not get to your Estimates.

The SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: Because you are preventing me from getting there.

Mr. VOWLES: We are anxious to get to the State enterprises, and we would like to deal with other matters connected with the Trust Funds; but, evidently, they are going to be sidestepped. The Minister in charge of the Department of Public Works spoke just before lunch to-day, and started to explain that we as an Opposition were trying to get him to do certain things. He also said what we would do if we got into power. He spoke on the authority of certain people outside, and said that they were going to divide up the public funds amongst certain persons whom he mentioned who are affected by the recent amendment of the Land Act. Let me tell him that I dissociate myself altogether from those things.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: We have our party and we have our platform. I do not care what outsiders decide. I do not care what stolen minutes are brought into this House. I suppose they were found on the floor in the Opposition room; I presume that is

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where the Minister got his copy. Probably he got it out of the waste-paper basket. There are individuals whose names are mentioned in those minutes who are figuring in the limelight every day, and I dissociate myself from them.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: They are your friends.

Mr. VOWLES: They are not friendly to me. Some of them hate me more than they hate the hon. gentleman, and they would do me harm, politically, if they could. These men's names are always figuring publicly, and I will not take any credit or discredit for their actions.

Mr. GLEDSON: Didn't you ask the hon. member for Townsville to sit on the front bench with you?

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member for Townsville is a member of the Country party, and he is welcome to sit on the front bench. I consider he is a very fine addition to our party.

OPPOSITION MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

Mr. VOWLES: At any rate, the Country party are not going to be dominated by outside gilded interests.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Did they not convey this information to you?

Mr. VOWLES: If they did, we are not going to act on it. The time is not far distant when we will have to throw them off altogether. We do not want them, and we will not have them. I know that this has got nothing to do with the vote under discussion, and I thank you, Mr. Cooper, for the latitude you have given me in replying to the statements of the Minister. I might just as well associate hon. members opposite with certain resolutions which were passed in Brisbane quite recently, and which those hon. members absolutely dissociate themselves from. Personally, I think I am quite entitled to do the same.

Mr. GLEDSON: They are officers of your organisation.

Mr. VOWLES: The officers of your organisation are your masters, but let me tell you that I have got no master. Some of these individuals have attempted to coerce me, but they found they could not do it.

Mr. DUNSTAN: Edkins and Garbutt are your masters.

Mr. GLEDSON: The rank and file of the workers are our masters.

Mr. VOWLES: These individuals are trying to coerce me. They could not do it outside, and now they are trying to do it inside.

The vote under discussion relates to buildings. If any member of this Chamber happens to visit the town I represent, he will do well to look at the condition of the public buildings there. The courthouse, I think, was built fifty years ago.

Mr. POLLOCK: What is the basis of the arrangement? You want 75 per cent. of the portfolios, do you not? (Government laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: They say that the hon. member has been angling for a portfolio, but I can tell him that he will never get one. (Opposition laughter.) The Lands Department, the Clerk of Petty Sessions Office, and all the other offices outside the Postal Department and the Railway Department, are centred in what is known as the

Court House building. From time to time, during the twenty years I have been there, certain additions have been made. The timber affected by white ants has been renewed occasionally; a daub of paint has been put on the building, or a little bit of a skillion has been added; but it has got to such a state that the large number of public servants who are housed there have to work under conditions which are absolutely insanitary. I remember that some two years ago Mr. Hardacre, a member of the Land Court, and formerly a member of the Government, was in Dalby, and I took him to the offices and asked him to have a look round. The Lands Commissioner told him that he had made representations to his department here that reasonable conditions for his men to work under should be provided. I have been in that courthouse probably three or four times a week at different periods, and I have seen Crown lands rangers and other officers take up their goods and chattels and go outside the court till the court business was finished and they could resume their work. The hon. member for Toowoomba knows that that is so. Mr. Hardacre promised, at a little reunion that we had, that he would do everything in his power to represent the case to the proper authorities, and I naturally thought I might have a bit of a "leg in" when I brought the matter up now.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Why did you not come to me?

Mr. VOWLES: I would not go to the office of any Minister of this Government. I do not want to be accused of coquetting with the Government, and I do not want to be publicly accused of putting myself in a false position as other persons were recently. I have never been in the office of the Secretary for Public Works, nor the Secretary for Public Instruction, and only once in the office of the Secretary for Railways. I do not want to go where a stenographer may be secreted.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You have been in my office. You were in my office at that deputation, when the Government reopened Wyrcema Milk Factory.

Mr. VOWLES: Never.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Were you not there that morning? You ought to have been there.

Mr. VOWLES: No; I was never in the Minister's office. I do not want to be accused of coquetting or of forming coalitions with the Government. There is only one thing to be done with hon. members opposite—keep your own place and have nothing to do with them, otherwise a false complexion will be placed upon your actions.

Mr. GLEDSON: How are you going to attend to your work?

Mr. VOWLES: I do all my work by correspondence. If I receive a letter from my electorate, I send the original to the department concerned and ask for criticism or a reply.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Why did you not write to me?

Mr. VOWLES: I thought the hon. member knew that the matter came up at a dinner at which all the officials of the department were present. I was one of the few guests. The Lands Commissioner—who, I believe, is a friend of hon. members opposite—said he had made representations on the subject, and we asked Mr. Hardacre, as

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a member of the Land Court, to support those representations; but whether it was done or not, the fact remains that the buildings are still in the same condition.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: This is the first time I have heard of it.

Mr. VOWLES: Probably the representations were made to their own department—the Lands Department—and they tell me that no action has been taken. The hon. member for Burke talks about the sympathetic treatment he receives from the department in the matter of schools. He is a lucky man. We do not all get the same sympathetic treatment, even on minor details. I have already given instances in this Chamber of how we have been put on the list "When funds are available." It probably is because I do not happen to be a Labour supporter. Hon. members opposite say that they have very seldom had a request turned down; I might say that I have very seldom had a request granted, small as my requests are. I believe that the hon. gentleman did on one occasion consent to have the bottoms of some tanks cemented because the water was running out of them.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I granted one request.

Mr. VOWLES: What was that?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: A permit for an art union. (Government laughter.)

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member never granted me one at all. I sent him the original letters and got his reply.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): There is no doubt that the leader of the Opposition may have a grievance about the courthouse at Dalby, but if he is not in a position to help himself I do not think he should call other members to help him.

Mr. VOWLES: I would not call on you.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member did invoke my aid. I appreciate the anxiety of the Opposition over the statement of the Secretary for Public Works. I have no hesitation in admitting that I have masters outside this House. The people who put me into Parliament are my masters. We have a responsibility to the people of Queensland who put us into this Chamber, and it is our duty to protect their interests. Why will the Opposition not admit that their masters outside are the capitalists? They are here to protect the big interests outside, even if they do not care to put that fact in the front window, as the resolutions which were read out show.

We hear a great deal regarding the workers of Queensland. We know very well that tenders for locomotives, ship-building, and other important contracts have been called in England and America for Australia, and Australian tenders came out lowest; and that was not piecework, but day labour. When Sir Ross Smith had an accident to his aeroplane, he said that the finest work was done in the Ipswich Railway Workshops. On the other hand, I can give a clear case where men in the Labour movement—industrialists—have not played the game. Take the Jondaryan State school, where, to my own knowledge, the department did not get a fair "go," and the men did not do a fair day's work. I have already criticised them. I am satisfied that they deliberately loafed against their own interests and the interests of the Labour Government. But for the last two

years in the Toowoomba district not one work has gone over the estimate. That is since there has been a reorganisation of the department. That reminds me of the late Commissioner for Railways. Hon. members opposite gave him an extension of three years, believing that Labour would last only three years. He was told by the Opposition to waste all the money he could on railway construction of the most useless kind. We saw money wilfully wasted at Chinchilla and Toowoomba for the purpose of bringing this Government into disrepute. I say without hesitation that the heads of departments have allowed men to do work in their own fashion without keeping control over them. But now we have reorganised our industries in such a way that the men are satisfied. They were not satisfied before; there was no organisation. If you left the staff in the office of the leader of the Opposition without control or somebody to set them to work, what would happen?

The Department of Public Works to-day is absolutely in the best condition it has been in for the last fifty years. During the last twelve months hardly an estimate was exceeded, because the men are now getting

back to normal times and supplies [4 p.m.] are more regular. The Opposition know that. Yet they say that we must have the contract system. We had the contract system exemplified recently in Brisbane on that cement mixer which was used in roadmaking—a steel machine which broke down under the strain, nevertheless the men had to keep pace with it. The men did not have a fair "spin" on that job; they were speeded up all through. No man could last many years at that class of work. We know what the contract system means. The contractor wants to make the most money he can out of his contract. What does he care about a few men being knocked out? If he can speed them up, all the better for him. If he knocks a few out, others will come along and take their places. There has not been extravagance in this department if we compare it with the Federal Department of Public Works. We hear no complaints from our opponents about the Federal Government. A thousand men were put out of work in Queensland through the closing down of the Canungra sawmills.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The other day the Chairman would not allow me to talk about Commonwealth affairs, yet he is now allowing you to do it.

Mr. BRENNAN: The Department of Public Works here has not been guilty of the extravagance displayed by the Works Department of the Commonwealth. The Canungra business meant a loss to the Commonwealth of £500,000; yet there is never a word of complaint from our opponents in regard to that. The smallest incident regarding schools has been introduced into this debate. I make fewer requests for favours for my electorate than other hon. members. The hon. member for East Toowoomba was here long before I got into Parliament, and nothing was ever done for Toowoomba.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: He will be here a long time after you are out of Parliament.

Mr. BRENNAN: If the workers are stupid, he will be. If the workers want politicians and not statesmen, let them put them in. (Laughter.) I could be as popular as the hon. member for East Toowoomba or the

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hon. member for Pittsworth, who now has no seat at all. That hon. member is trying to undermine the unfortunate hon. member for Cunningham and do him out of his seat. I do not do that sort of thing.

MR. J. H. C. ROBERTS: What you know and what you do not know would provide sufficient material to write a book of revelations. (Laughter.)

MR. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Pittsworth is always making senseless interjections. When we are dealing with most important matters connected with the welfare of Queensland he interjects senselessly, and tries to put off the track members who have prepared speeches. I think the Department of Public Works might agree to put electric light on the staircase leading to the courthouse in Toowoomba. It is a most dangerous staircase, being very dark, and it would be a great improvement to have electric light placed there. That is the only request that I have to make at the present time. The Minister realises that an additional school is a long-felt want in Toowoomba and has purchased certain land at Newtown. I trust that the erection of that school will be gone on with. Toowoomba is one of the most important centres in Queensland. It is a growing centre—a progressive centre. It would be more progressive if they followed my advice in big things.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Maekay*): A few points have been raised to which I wish to make a short reply. The hon. member for Logan urged the establishment of a rural school at Beenleigh. No doubt, Beenleigh is a very suitable place in which to build a rural school. I will have inquiries made into that and the other matter which the hon. member mentioned.

The leader of the Opposition complains of not getting anything done in his electorate. He complained also that certain work was done, notwithstanding that he had not made any representations as member for the district. It is the usual practice of members of this Chamber, no matter to what party they belong, to make representations to the proper quarter, if they are interested in any proposition in the way of school buildings, repairs to schools, or repairs to courthouses. The Works Department controls the building operations for all departments. We do not initiate work, but we decide how and when work shall proceed. The work to be done is limited by the vote placed at the disposal of the Works Department. Periodically the Department of Public Instruction sends along propositions which are considered by me, and the more urgent works are approved of and commenced. The same thing holds good regard to hospitals and courthouses. The hon. member for Dalby should have approached either the Department of Justice or my department to press the claims of Dalby with regard to the courthouse.

MR. VOWLES: In this instance the Lands Department was connected with it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If the hon. gentleman had approached the Lands Department or the Department of Justice, it would have sent me a memorandum asking me to go into the matter, and, if funds were available, to do the work. That is done in the ordinary course of events. There is nothing belittling in a member of Parliament, even if he is the leader of His Majesty's Opposition, waiting upon a Minister or an Under

Secretary. The hon. gentleman was wrong in saying that no work had been done in his electorate: £1,400 was spent in his electorate in connection with school buildings last year.

MR. VOWLES: Where was that work done—Warra and Chinchilla? That has been outstanding for five years.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I have been waiting more than five years for many things that I have not got yet. The leader of the Opposition and other members of his party have suggested that undue discrimination is made between Governmental electorates and Opposition electorates. To clinch that once and for all, I have had the figures prepared, and I propose to give the expenditure on school buildings. The total amount spent last year was £76,710 6s. 5d. In electorates represented by Government members there was an expenditure of £39,540 8s. 8d., and in electorates represented by Opposition members, £37,169 17s. 9d. Can anyone cavil at that expenditure, when it is borne in mind that there was a difference of only £2,000 in favour of electorates represented by Government members, and we have two more members than are sitting on the Opposition benches? I recognise that it is the duty of my department under this vote to make provision for children, and, although I am a strong party man, I do not stand for the victimisation of innocent little children because of the foolishness of their parents. If the parents are foolish enough to return Opposition members to Parliament, there is all the more need for money for the education of their children.

The hon. member for Toowong referred to the question of painting this building. The leader of the Opposition asked a question some time ago, and full information was given. The hon. member for Toowong argued that the cost of painting Parliament House was unduly excessive, and that under the contract system the amount per yard would have been less. One must recognise the class of work on this building. The work done was better than is usually done in the ordinary work of painting. There are not ten square yards of straight-ahead work in the whole building. There are many railings, etc., and various other work which is difficult to get at. There was a large amount of burning off, polishing, and varnishing that is not usually done in ordinary buildings. The doors were burnt off and filled. The class of work done is not the work that is usually performed in painting. I know the painting business from A to Z, and I know that the work performed here was of a much higher standard of excellence than is usually performed in painting in Queensland. One must realise the inaccessible character of the work, and we must realise that the inside of this Chamber, with all the embellishment of plaster work, cost more to paint than painting a woolshed, with ordinary pine lining-boards. It is unjust to compare the prices unless you compare also the standard of excellence of the work. I know that one can get a suit of clothes for probably £4 10s. in certain "slop" shops in Brisbane and get value for the money; but no one would compare it with a well-made suit properly tailored by a first-class tailor. I admit that the price for the painting is high, but the inaccessible nature and difficult character of the work justifies that expense. The comparison was not made on a fair basis.

MR. VOWLES: It was all exterior work.

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HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes; but there were railings, veranda posts, and balustrades, domes, and windows. All that work is difficult work, and takes more time to do than such straight-ahead work as painting ordinary chamfer-boards.

The hon. member also referred to the fact that the plaster on the Taringa school was cracked, and said that it was due to faulty specifications supplied by the department. That work was done by a contractor named Anderson in 1913, long before this Government came into office. The amount of the contract was £1,070, and, if the work was faulty, it was a condemnation of the Administration then in power. I am not in a position to say whether the specification was faulty or not. Certainly work of that kind should not be cracked or blistered. I cannot say what is at fault, because I have not examined the work myself. It may be due to faulty oil or faulty material.

MR. GREEN: That was what the hon. member for Toowong said.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Yes. If it is a condemnation of any department or Administration, it is a condemnation of the Administration to which the hon. member for Bulimba belonged.

Mention has been made of the hospital at Gayndah. The estimated cost of that building was £7,378, and the actual cost was £7,636 2s. 9d., including extra work in connection with sewage tanks and drainage. The hospital committee asked to be allowed to carry out a water service, which brought the total cost up to £8,479 16s. 10d. It will thus be seen that the excess over the estimate was not due to faulty estimating by the department. It is worthy of note that this building is a new type in Queensland. It is built of reinforced plaster. Three others have since been erected, one at Mackay, one at Avy, and I believe another at Gayndah. The department was experimenting in this type of construction, and the excess over the estimate is nothing to be concerned about or any reason for condemning the department. Since that time I have had a reorganisation of the administrative staff of the department. When this estimate was made it was the practice of the architectural draftsmen in the head office to make the estimates. Anyone who has had any experience of building construction understands that architects' estimates are very often faulty. Architects' estimates are exceeded every day, as a matter of course, simply because they are not responsible for carrying out the work. Since that time I have established a proper costing and estimating branch, with men skilled in this form of work, and as a consequence the estimates are based on more correct data than was the case in the past. The Gayndah people will have to bear one-third of the expense, the same as the Children's Hospital was able to gain one-third of the saving on that building.

It was interesting to hear the leader of the Opposition repudiate the Executive Council of his own party. It must be borne in mind that attending that meeting were representatives from Northern, Central, and Southern Queensland, and it cannot be denied that it is the official executive of the hon. member's party. The hon. member for Townsville attended as a delegate, and did not protest against anything that the leader of the Opposition now repudiates.

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MR. GREEN: How does the hon. gentleman know?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The leader of the Opposition in his statement repudiated his junta outside. I was sorry to hear the hon. member suggest that Mr. Edkins hated me as much as he hated him. I am not aware that anyone hates me. Every student of human nature must recognise that hate is born of fear, and, as I fear no one, I hate no one. I was also interested in the statement that men like Garbutt and Edkins would be expelled from the party.

MR. VOWLES: I never mentioned Garbutt's name.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: No, you did not mention Garbutt, but you mentioned Edkins.

MR. VOWLES: I did not say they would be expelled.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: You inferred it.

MR. VOWLES: No.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It will be interesting to see what takes place at future meetings of the party, and I wish the hon. member for Dalby all sorts of luck in his dispute with men like Mr. Edkins and Mr. Garbutt.

MR. MOORE: We wish you all sorts of luck at the next Labour Conference, too.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am not worrying about that.

MR. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): I want to make a few comments in regard to the necessities of country districts in connection with school buildings, but I do not, in any shape or form, wish to be parochial in my ideas. I want to urge upon the Minister in charge of the department the necessity for putting our schools in good order, and the necessity for building new schools in districts in which they are required. Complaints have been made all round the Chamber that there has been a reduction in the vote for the Department of Public Works. Last year the vote was £205,411, and the amount spent was £190,073. This year the amount on the Estimates is £202,621, showing a decrease in the amount that is to be voted for this department, a certain proportion of which will be used for the upkeep of schools at present in existence and for building new schools. The Minister and his officials know perfectly well that there are many schools in country districts that to-day are in a condition that would lead one to believe that they are worth pulling down and having new schools erected in their place. Unfortunately, the Department of Public Works has to a great extent been stunted by the Government in connection with work that has to be carried out.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: There is an increase of £80,000 on the Loan Estimates.

MR. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Even with that increase, I still think that the country schools and country buildings generally will suffer as against those in the larger centres of population. I do not for one moment begrudge the construction of public buildings in Brisbane, Toowoomba, or anywhere else, provided that we get a fair and reasonable proportion spent in the sparsely populated districts that we represent, where children have to travel 8 or 9 miles to school.

There is in my mind a certain amount of confusion as to whether I am to interview the Secretary for Public Instruction, when I want a school building or want to have a school attended to, or whether I am to interview the Secretary for Public Works. Personally, I take the bull by the horns, and visit both Ministers, and under those conditions you have a chance of getting something done, because, if you can get the Secretary for Public Instruction up against the Secretary for Public Works, and then step in as a mediator or as an adjudicator, you have a chance of getting something done. Owing to the dilapidated condition of many of our school buildings, which were constructed a long time ago, the time has arrived when we should consider the question of floating a loan for the special purpose of renovating the schools throughout the State and building new schools. The hon. member for Albert mentioned that in his electorate it would cost something like £10,000 or £12,000 to repair the schools and build the necessary new schools, and in making that statement the hon. member was probably a little under rather than a little over the estimate of the requirements in his own electorate. Every country electorate to-day requires the expenditure of a good deal of money in order to put the present school buildings in a proper condition. If you go to the schools on the Downs, and right out in the Western districts, you will find weatherboard buildings that were put up many years ago. The weatherboards have buckled, and the amount of draught which goes through those schools in winter time is quite sufficient to cause a serious outbreak of influenza, pneumonia, or some other disease to which children are prone to fall victims, owing entirely to the fact that the schools are unsuitable—not due to neglect on the part of the Government, but to the fact that they do not seem to be ready to spend the money that is necessary to put the schools in a safe condition for children to be educated in. I hope to see within the next few years a loan floated for the special purpose of providing school accommodation in country districts where it is needed.

I listened with a good deal of interest to the remarks of the hon. member for Bowen. The hon. member seems to think it is his duty to attempt to cast certain reflections upon members on this side of the House. Personally, I think there are a good many schools that could be built and repaired in country districts in a satisfactory way by local contractors, provided that the Government would realise that day labour in those districts is adding to the cost of building. The hon. member for Bowen, in talking about day labour, said that he always insisted on efficiency. He stated that men must work, yet I find here an article in connection with a tour of the North by a Minister of the Federal Government.

Mr. HARTLEY: What paper are you quoting from?

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: It touches absolutely upon the question of day labour. It reads—

“The tour of the North by the Minister for Defence (Senator Pearce) was a succession of bright incidents, intermingled with some of a darker hue.”

I do not know what the hon. member for Bowen will say when he realises that so

eminent a man as the Minister for Defence, Senator Pearce, looks upon Bowen as one of those incidents of a darker hue—

“One of the latter was at Bowen, where, he said, he was a spectator of one of the slowest exhibitions of loading by waterside workers he had ever seen. The men were engaged in loading quarter cases of tomatoes, cucumbers, and fruits into the Wyreema, and it was a sight to sadden any Australian. No country on earth, or no industry could be rich enough to maintain labour working at such a rate. The cases could have been handled by an average fair-sized boy with ease, yet there were two men in a railway truck, and four more between the truck and the ship's sling—a distance of about 8 feet. Even then the rate at which the cases were passed from hand to hand was slow in the extreme. The result was that the cargo, which had been grown by the workers of Bowen, and which, no doubt, would be sold to the workers in Sydney and other ports, had probably had its cost increased by quite 25 per cent., due to the slow handling and the attendant delay to the ship and increased freight rates. ‘The fact of the matter is,’ concluded the Minister, ‘they are practically profiteering on the workers who consume that produce.’”

At 4.30 p.m.,

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, and of the Sessional Order agreed to by the House on 30th August, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN reported progress.

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

QUESTIONS.

COST OF HOSPITAL AND NURSES' QUARTERS, GAYNDAH.

Mr. VOWLES (*Dalby*), in the absence of Mr. Corser (*Burnett*), asked the Secretary for Public Works—

“1. What was the estimated cost of (a) the new hospital; (b) the nurses' quarters at Gayndah?

“2. What was the actual cost of each?

“3. What amount has been demanded from the Gayndah Hospital Committee towards making good the cost in excess of estimated cost?

“4. As the amount demanded for the construction of these buildings has already been paid, is it reasonable to now saddle the committee with a large amount of unforeseen expenditure, especially in view of the fact that the Government provides the whole of the cost of buildings and maintenance of the Brisbane Hospital?

“5. As there is over £140,000 to the credit of the ‘Golden Casket’ fund for hospital purposes, will the Government make available from this fund an amount sufficient to liquidate the claim now being made on the Gayndah Hospital Committee?”

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

“ 1. (a) Estimated cost new hospital building, including water service and fire-place to dining-room ...	£	6,300		
(b) Estimated cost of nurses' quarters		1,078		
		<u>£7,378</u>		
	£	s.	d.	
“ 2. Actual cost new hospital buildings, etc. ...	7,656	2	9	
Actual cost nurses' quarters	843	14	1	
	<u>£8,479</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>10</u>	

“ The above does not include installation of electric lighting, carried out locally at a cost of £140.

“ Note.—Installation of water service was carried out by the hospital committee—the actual cost exceeded the estimate and approved amount by £97 7s. 8d.

“ 3. £417 5s. 8d.

“ 4. The approved conditions under which endowment is granted towards the cost of erection of hospital buildings provide that such endowment shall be paid at the rate of £2 to £1 on unsubsidised subscriptions to the hospital building fund. There is no sound reason why the Gayndah Hospital Committee should be placed in a better position in regard to endowment than any other hospital committee. This hospital is not comparable with the Brisbane General Hospital.

“ 5. This is a question of policy for the consideration of the Honourable the Home Secretary.”

EXPENDITURE ON COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURE.

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

“ What was the sum expended in connection with the Council of Agriculture up to the end of June last, and what has been its cost since then up to date?”

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

“ The expenditure on 30th June last was £2,120 2s. 5d., and from the 1st July to the 31st August it was £2,475 14s. 1d. I would remind honourable members that the Auditor-General is charged with the investigation of all such expenditure, and any unwarranted expenditure would be reported by him to Parliament.”

REPORT ON PLANE CREEK CENTRAL SUGAR-MILL WEIGHBRIDGE.

Mr. SWAYNE asked the Treasurer—

“ If, on application, a copy of the recent report on Plane Creek Sugar-mill weighbridge by the inspector of weights and measures, and any papers in connection therewith, can be obtained; and, if so, to whom to apply?”

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

“ The result of the official test of the weighbridge has already been conveyed

to the growers' representative at the mill. The honourable member may peruse the papers at the Treasury.”

PAYMENT OF EX-SOLDIERS, BEERBURRUM SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

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

“ 1. Is he aware that ex-soldiers engaged in the work of clearing up deserted farms at Beerburum are only being paid at the rate of 10s. per day?

“ 2. Does he consider this a sufficient amount to keep a man, his wife, and three children in a fair average standard of comfort?

“ 3. If not, will he issue instructions that a rate equivalent to at least the present basic wage be paid to such employees?”

The SECRETARY FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. J. Larcombe, *Kippel*), in the absence of the Secretary for Public Lands (Hon. J. H. Coyne, *Warrego*), replied—

“ 1 to 3. Inquiry is being made into the matter.”

ALLEGED INQUIRIES BY GOVERNMENT INTO PRIVATE AFFAIRS OF CERTAIN PUBLIC SERVANTS.

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

“ 1. Is it a fact that the Government are having inquiries made into the private affairs of certain public servants who openly opposed the application to the Arbitration Court for a reduction of the basic wage?

“ 2. Are the members of the Criminal Investigation Department being used in this connection, as they were used to investigate the affairs of the leaders of past unemployed demonstrations?

“ 3. Are these investigations being made with a view to securing evidence that may be used by the members of the Government's party, if opposed by any members of the public service at the next State elections?”

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

“ 1. No.

“ 2 and 3. See answer to No. 1.”

ORDERS TO WHICH NO RETURNS HAD BEEN MADE.

The Clerk having read the “ List of Orders to which no returns had yet been made,”

Mr. MORGAN (*Marilla*): I would like to ask the Premier without notice—

“ When are we likely to get any information regarding the orders to which no returns have yet been made?”

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

“ I will make inquiries.”

PAPER.

The following paper was laid on the table:—

Statement concerning certain life assurance companies.

SUPPLY.

RESUMPTION OF COMMITTEE—ELEVENTH ALLOTTED DAY.

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

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS.
BUILDINGS.

Question stated—

“That £95,000 be granted for ‘Buildings.’”

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS (*Pittsworth*): I was speaking on the question of day labour when business was suspended at half-past 4, and I was quoting from a newspaper cutting in reference to day labour at Bowen, and to the way it was carried out there by the supporters of the hon. member for Bowen. We were told in that cutting that the principal sufferers in connection with the methods adopted in loading tomatoes by the wharf lumpers were the workers themselves. The hon. member for Bowen pointed out that he had no time for the man who was not efficient, and he had no time for the man who would not work. The hon. member wanted to know what the bosses were doing when men were not doing their work. I want to know from the hon. member for Bowen what his electors were doing. The hon. member has often told us here about his sympathy for the man who produces foodstuffs. He wants the people to believe that he sympathises with the man on the land, yet no remonstrance was made by the hon. member for Bowen or any other hon. member of the Labour party regarding the day labour principle as carried out in Bowen. One of the growers wrote to the papers in Bowen objecting to the “go slow” principle that was adopted by the wharf labourers at Bowen, and this was also brought under the notice of Senator Pearce, the Federal Minister for Defence. When they found out who the fruitgrower was who wrote to the paper, the wharf lumpers refused to load his fruit. Yet the hon. member for Bowen tells us times without number that he is a sympathiser with the man on the land. The time is not far distant when, if the hon. member keeps on changing his views as he does, we shall yet see him a member of the Queensland Club. The principle of day labour, which Senator Pearce saw in operation at Bowen, is carried out in connection with the building of schools in the country districts. Repeatedly we see men engaged at work on country schools having to walk six or seven miles to their work. These men naturally require to go home at the week end, and in order to get home they have to walk six or seven miles to the nearest railway station, and then go home. On the Monday morning they have to go seven miles to get to their work again. I say that that only increases the cost of our schools. It was never brought home to me more than it was quite recently when I had certain additions made to my private residence. I had a building put up which was considerably larger than many schools built in that district. I had it built under the contract system, and I got it built for a little over one-half of what it cost to erect a school 24 feet by 30 feet.

Mr. W. COOPER: State the amount that it cost you to build it and we will see if it cost you one-half.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am quite willing to state the amount if it is of any

interest to the hon. member, but I do not think it is worth my while to state it.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Ah!

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I will simply say that I had two buildings put up for what it cost the department to put up a school in my electorate.

Mr. HARTLEY: You mean you had two humpies put up

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I am not going to refer to them as humpies at all. They are not as big as the room which the hon. member for Fitzroy lives in, perhaps, and they are not like this beautiful Chamber we are in at the present time. I live under different conditions to what the hon. member for Fitzroy does. I have not got a beautiful interior like we have in this Assembly, but I am quite happy in my own home. I say that the two buildings were put up and they cost exactly the same as it cost to put up a school in my electorate. By adopting the day labour principle it has cost the Government a considerable sum of money. I am quite in accord with the hon. member for Bowen in his remarks in regard to supervision. We all know that in connection with buildings in the larger centres of population such as Brisbane, Toowoomba, or Warwick, the supervision is good, but the same supervision cannot be given to the men working on the smaller jobs in country districts. The result is that we are having a large sum of money spent every year needlessly for which we get no return. I hope the Minister will in the future urge upon the party of which he is a member, and the Government in which he is a Minister, the necessity for reconsidering the day labour principle as applied to small country schools. I am only appealing for a fair and reasonable thing. Why should the local contractors, who are eminently fitted to carry out contracts, and who are prepared to carry them out, be debarred from carrying out that work when they can do it at considerably less cost than the department? The conditions applicable to the work carried out in the larger centres of population are infinitely different from the conditions in the country districts. I listened to the speech of the hon. member for Burke. I believe, as he believes, that it is quite an unreasonable thing that children in the country districts should be asked to walk seven or eight miles to school. Why should they be asked to walk seven or eight miles to school? It is not a reasonable proposition, and we must find the accommodation necessary to enable them to receive an education which will permit them to compete successfully in life with the children educated in the larger centres of population. Recently I heard the hon. member for South Brisbane talking about the requirements of a high school on the other side of the river, and I do not blame him for advocating its claim. He realises, as I realise, that it is absolutely necessary that the children should have the best education it is possible to give them, and we cannot expect children who have to walk six miles to school in the morning and six miles back in the evening to be in a condition to absorb the knowledge which the schoolmistress is able to impart.

Mr. HARTLEY: And after having to milk the cows too.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The hon. member is a member of a party who, knowing

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probably that they have to milk a few cows in the morning, nevertheless says, "Let them walk six or seven miles to school. It will not hurt them." Will the hon. member say that it takes more out of the children to milk half a dozen cows than it does to walk six miles to school? Not on his life, nor could he prove it if he did. Rather than interject the hon. member would be well advised to keep quiet. The department must realise before it is too late that the schooling of the country children must receive far greater consideration than in the past. In Brisbane we probably find two or three other members acting in conjunction with the hon. member for South Brisbane in advocating the same thing, because they are all more or less interested in the children attending the school in the electorate of that hon. member; but in the country electorates each member has to fight his own battle. If I want anything in my electorate, or if the hon. member for Bowen wants anything in his constituency, we have to fight our own battles, and consequently, whilst we may be getting fair and reasonable treatment, it is very difficult to put our case as strongly as the hon. member for South Brisbane and two or three members of adjoining electorates can put their case. I know that the Department of Public Instruction is going strong for many projects in which I believe, and I sincerely hope that the Department of Public Works will realise the state of the schools in the country districts, and that the Minister during the recess will show that he recognises his duty to travel in the country districts in order to get first-hand information.

Now I am going to be parochial. Some little time ago I made application to the Home Secretary's Department for a decent courthouse and police barracks at Millmerran, and I was told that no money was available. However, after a good deal of talking with the Home Secretary, he agreed that, if a resident of the district would put up a house suitable for police barracks and offices and police court, he would pay the rent for four or five years. Millmerran is a growing district and is going to be a fairly big township, and the accommodation there had been the subject of complaint on more than one occasion by the police magistrate who tries cases in that centre. To-day we have better conditions, but that is not due to any action of the Department of Public Works, but because one of the residents of the district built quarters suitable for the purpose.

I look forward to the time when the Minister in charge of these Estimates will make a name for himself by taking in hand the remodelling and rebuilding of many of our country schools. I think that £76,000 was spent last year on public buildings of this kind, of which £34,000 was spent in country districts.

Mr. GLEDSON: £37,000.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: I thank the hon. member for the correction. If we are not going to have more than £76,000 spent this year on our schools, then when we get on that side of the House—which is not going to be very long—we are going to have a legacy from this Government which will be worse than any legacy they received from the Government they succeeded. The putting of our country schools in better condition requires the thought of a statesman, and I

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believe the Secretary for Public Works might make a name for himself if he took the thing in hand now and did not let it go on for the next two or three years, only to find that, whereas many of the buildings which to-day could be put in order for £100, they will then have to be rebuilt entirely at a cost to the State of anything from £500 to £600. In conclusion, I repeat that I have received reasonable consideration at the hands of the Secretary for Public Works and the Secretary for Public Instruction simply because I have put them one against the other and then insisted upon getting whatever one will give me.

Mr. COLLINS (*Bowen*): The hon. member has gone out of his way to make a cowardly attack on men who are not here to defend themselves. As the representative of the Bowen waterside workers, of whom I am very proud, I take the opportunity to reply to that attack. The hon. member gave us a quotation from a newspaper of something which Senator Pearce is supposed to have said about their "going slow." At the time I replied through the Press to Senator Pearce. At that time they were handling fruit particularly, and the hon. member for Windsor and the hon. member for Bulimba know that it would be quite easy for them to destroy that fruit by rushing and dumping down the cases and breaking them. Quite recently I saw that complaints had been made about the condition in which fruit had reached Sydney; but these waterside workers had due regard to the interests of the workers on the land and handled the fruit in the way in which it should be handled. The hon. member said that some farmer had complained about the way in which his fruit had been handled, but I would like to tell him that there is more than one farmer or fruitgrower in and around Bowen. Consider-

[5 p.m.] ing that from 1st July, 1921, to 30th June, 1922, over 150,000 cases were shipped from Bowen and I heard no complaints about the slow methods of the waterside workers at Bowen in connection with their handling of that fruit, it does not do credit to the hon. member for Pittsworth to make the same kind of cowardly attack as was made by Senator Pearce. The waterside workers knew Senator Pearce when he belonged to the Labour party, and I have no doubt that they resented very much the action taken by him in deserting the Labour party and joining the Nationalist party. No doubt, when they saw him, they "threw off" at him a bit. I suppose he was sitting in a deck chair looking down upon the men who made it possible for him to occupy that chair. He ought to have been ashamed of himself to make an attack upon men who are doing such useful work as is being done by the waterside workers at Bowen. The waterside workers at Bowen have the confidence of the farmers round about Bowen. They handle not only the fruit grown by the farmers round about Bowen, but all the sugar which is grown on the Inkerman Estate, and that which comes from the Proserpine Mill. They do work which is a credit not only to Bowen but to the whole of Queensland.

Mr. EDWARDS (*Nanango*): On every occasion this vote is the subject of a good deal of comment. The Minister—who at one time, I believe, was a contractor—himself recognises that the time has come, particularly in country districts, when the contract system should be given a trial. In numbers

of cases the men on the land—returned soldiers in some instances—could put up schools if we allowed them the opportunity of building the schools on contract.

Mr. W. COOPER: Give them the opportunity to practise?

Mr. EDWARDS: It is not a matter of their getting practice. They are as good carpenters as you can pick up anywhere. Government members are continually talking about contractors sweating their men. That does not enter into this question. These settlers would be only too pleased to take a contract to build these schools. I maintain they could be built at a great deal less cost than is the case to-day. The day-labour system is largely responsible for the deplorable condition into which the Works Department has got in connection with the building of country schools. I have here a letter from the secretary of a school committee relating an experience that is typical of many that come under my notice in different country districts—

“For a number of years the committee has been asking the Education Department to build a new school at Memerambi. We have had promises at times, but it has always stopped at that.

“We would like your valuable assistance in this matter. If the Minister were coming to this district shortly we could arrange a deputation, or perhaps a personal interview on your part might do some good.

“The school has been built about twenty years. The walls are hardwood weatherboards, undressed, and the wind simply whistles through them. The roof is leaky, and when it rains there is not a dry inch in the school.

“There are fifty children attending at present.”

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: How did you persuade a clerk in the Department of Public Instruction to give you a copy of certain papers?

Mr. EDWARDS: I challenge the Minister to correct that statement. I say that it is not correct.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Didn't you go to Mr. Vizer one day when he was dealing with certain recommendations of his department to mine and ask him for a copy of them? And when he refused to do it you said, “You might as well give me them, because I will get them, anyhow.” Then you asked a question in the House about it.

Mr. EDWARDS: I say without any hesitation that that is not correct.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is correct.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is not correct. The Minister is only inventing that to try and stop me in this House. On every occasion on which I have risen in connection with this vote he has given one of those “soap-box” speeches of his afterwards. I am going to make him give another to-day before I finish with this. I have the greatest respect for the officers of the Department of Public Instruction. I have so much respect for the Minister in that department that I would not attempt to do a thing like that. I know that the information would not be given to me, and I would not ask for it.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: You asked for it, all right.

Mr. EDWARDS: I never did. We have had promises made at times that the work would be done, but it has always stopped at that. The Works Department is getting so far behind that it will be impossible to catch up unless the matter is taken in hand seriously and at once. For years past many schools in my district have been asking continually for repairs. Certain districts are advancing rapidly, and education is required for the children of the people. This is particularly so on soldier settlements. Take the case of the Burrandowan school for the children of the soldier settlers. At the end of last year that work was recommended by the Works Department, but I do not think that the school has been started. Children in the city have such facilities for travelling that they can get about and receive education without very great difficulty; if they cannot get it at one end of the city, they can go to the other end. In many country districts the parents of the children are simply driven away to other districts, because they cannot get the education their children require. The day-labour system is not solely responsible. There must be co-operation between the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Public Works in connection with this matter. Even after the Minister has recommended that certain works be carried out, sometimes months elapse before the work is put under way. When work is recommended in a country district it should be carried out at once. Hon. members must realise that, when children at the age of ten or twelve years lose a year's education, their education is practically ruined. Parents went with their children to the Burrandowan district, and they have advocated the building of a school ever since they went there. If it was not for this red-tape day-labour system the department could say to the men in the district, “Give us a price for putting up a school,” and the men would be able to put up that school at a very low cost.

Mr. HARTLEY: A bark humpy.

Mr. EDWARDS: There are just as good men reared and educated in a bark humpy as the hon. member.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is no argument why they should continue to erect bark humpies.

Mr. EDWARDS: It is better that children should be educated in bark humpies than that they should receive no education at all.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am talking about putting up bark humpies for schools.

Mr. EDWARDS: There is no such thing as bark humpies for schools.

Mr. HARTLEY: There used to be under your Government.

Mr. EDWARDS: Unfortunately, I have never had a Government. I hope that when I am sitting behind a Government I shall be able to help to carry out the work of educating the children in country districts a bit better than this Government have done. I am sure that the Minister will agree that there has not been the amount spent in country districts by this Government that was spent by past Governments. All the schools in my district were built by past Governments. The Minister must know that it is necessary to continue to erect new schools and to repair the old ones. We know that in many instances the teachers cannot get a place to reside in, and some

Mr. Edwards!

teachers have to travel six or seven miles every morning to school. That state of affairs should not exist. I know of districts where the people have advocated the building of teachers' residences for years past, and they have always been told that it was no use advocating that, because the work would not be carried out. They were told that the work of constructing schools was too far behind.

Mr. W. COOPER: Quite right.

Mr. EDWARDS: Does that not prove that it is necessary for the department to shake itself up and put in hand the work of building new schools and repairing old ones? I believe the Secretary for Public Instruction is always sympathetic.

The CHAIRMAN: Might I suggest to the hon. member that he defer his remarks on that matter until the Committee reaches the Estimates in connection with the Department of Public Instruction?

Mr. EDWARDS: I believe that the Secretary for Public Instruction has got the interests of the children at heart, and that he makes every effort to have the schools completed. In the different districts he has visited he has recommended in many instances that the work be carried out, but there always seems to be some trouble with the Department of Public Works. They do not seem to be able to get the work in hand in a way to cope with the educational facilities required by children in the country districts.

Mr. DASH: The delegation was responsible for that.

Mr. EDWARDS: If there ever was a threaddare and old suggestion, it is the suggestion about the delegation. Anyone with any "top-piece" at all would look for something new. If the Minister requires any further proof of the want of buildings, I shall be pleased to supply it.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It is not a question of proof; it is a question of funds. We can only spend the funds allowed. I do not intend to exceed the Estimates.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am very pleased the Minister has stated that. Does he think that it is fair, when we can get schools built at a lower cost than they are built by the department, that he should stick hard and fast to the policy of day labour when insufficient funds are available?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The buildings could not be constructed in the same way at a lower cost.

Mr. EDWARDS: They could. Would it not be better to stretch the matter a little in the interests of the children of this State?

Mr. WINSTANLEY: And sacrifice quality for quantity.

Mr. MOORE: Nonsense!

Mr. EDWARDS: All the suggestions and insinuations about contractors being dishonest should be cut out. I am satisfied that nearly every contractor, particularly those in the carpentering line who are able to build country schools, were at one time working men. No one would be correct in saying that they are dishonest. They will carry out the work according to specifications, and if they do not, it is easy for the Minister to compel them to do so.

Mr. W. COOPER: It is not easy.

Mr. Edwards.

Mr. EDWARDS: The hon. member seems to know a good deal about it. He must have some insight into the matter.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Did the hon. member see what the Metropolitan Water and Sewerage Board engineer said about the matter? He said that if the pipes were put down under contract he would require an inspector at each joint.

Mr. EDWARDS: He has a very poor opinion of mankind.

Mr. HARTLEY: He has a very keen knowledge of mankind.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: He is a very capable engineer.

Mr. EDWARDS: He possesses an incorrect impression. But that matter is altogether different from building country schools. A man in the country districts might have a travelling plant, and he is able to saw his own timber and put the school up. It is easy to inspect the building to see that it is constructed according to the specifications. I hope that the Minister will not allow the children to lack educational facilities for the sake of the hard-and-fast policy of day labour against the contract system. He knows that schools will be erected in half the time under the contract system. I have been a contractor myself, and I know something about it.

Mr. W. COOPER: Ah! I thought there was something behind it.

Mr. EDWARDS: At one time I was prepared to put up a fence against any man within 70 miles of my district.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The small contractor starts work very early in the morning. He does not work an eight-hour day.

Mr. EDWARDS: Exactly. Does not the Minister now prove that it would be better, in the interests of the children and the people in the country districts, that they should be given an opportunity to erect schools?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We believe in working an eight-hour day and paying award rates.

Mr. EDWARDS: That is all right, but to establish a hard-and-fast rule like that is carrying it too far. Very often men are sent hundreds of miles to do a small job, when men could be obtained in the locality to do the work; but they do not get the work because they do not belong to a union, or something like that. That is carrying the thing too far. Anything at all would be better than allowing our boys and girls in country districts to go without education.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: As I stated this morning, I gave instructions two years ago, in connection with small jobs in remote districts, that if the local school committees will get the work done we will give them authority to do it.

Mr. EDWARDS: I am pleased that the Minister has realised that it is necessary, under certain conditions, to have the work done by contract. I appeal to hon. members sitting behind the Government to do something for the children in the backblocks.

Mr. COLLINS: You do not represent the backblocks. The backblocks are represented by members on this side.

Mr. EDWARDS: If the hon. member comes to my electorate, I will guarantee to

lose him in twenty-four hours, and he will never be found again unless he is found by the Labour party. Once again, I appeal to hon. members opposite to do something for the children in country districts, and by doing so they will be assisting to keep the parents on the land, and thereby helping to develop the State, and it needs developing very badly.

Mr. HARTLEY (*Fit-roy*): It certainly makes one smile to hear the complaints from the Opposition benches about the school accommodation that is provided now. Everybody knows that the neglect of previous Administrations in the matter of providing schools in outside areas was notorious. In Brisbane areas like Windsor and some of those places, they certainly built fine palatial schools, but I do not think any Government in Australia so neglected the outside areas in the matter of school accommodation as the Denham Government and previous Administrations. As regards the complaints about the distances which children have to travel to school being great, where the facilities for attending school are few, there is no greater example of that than is to be found in some of the Northern electorates represented by members on this side. Take the electorate of the hon. member for Gregory, or the electorate of the hon. member for Burke. You could put half a dozen of these so-called "cocky" electorates into those electorates.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The members for those constituencies have said that they have done very well.

Mr. HARTLEY: They have done very well because of their own keenness and their own efforts. They have done very well without the assistance of the department. Although the department has given more facilities than were given in the past, the men in North Queensland, and the men in the outside areas in Central Queensland, had sufficient interest in their children, and were sufficiently generous and broad-minded to provide school facilities long before it was necessary for this Government to put their policy into force. The trouble is that the "cow-cocky" wants a school put up right against his cow-bail, so that, when his children have finished milking the cows, they can go to the school, and so comply with the provisions of the Education Act. I do not suppose that even that would satisfy some of the constituents of hon. members opposite, but, fortunately, that class of man is becoming fewer.

Mr. MOORE: He does not exist at all, except in your imagination.

Mr. HARTLEY: I will give a specific instance to show that he does exist. The hon. member for Pittsworth is one, and the hon. member for Nanango is another, who have complained about the distances children have to walk to school. That is not the trouble. They are not worrying themselves about the youngster tiring himself too much by walking these long distances. In most of the country districts to-day the youngsters have a pony or a sulky. The father is in a sufficiently good position under this Government to afford these things, and to enable his children to ride to school; but I know there are some members opposite, and some people in the country, who object to the time it takes a child to go to school, because

it means he must be withdrawn from his work either in the dairy or in the cow-yard.

Mr. VOWLES: Do those men own motor-cars?

Mr. MOORE: The farmers have to work their children to the bone in order to make a living now.

Mr. HARTLEY: Does the hon. member say that, in spite of the fact that the Tory Government were in power for so many years, the farmers have to work their "kiddies" to the bone in order to make a living? That is a very severe libel on the men the hon. member represents. If the hon. member thinks there is nothing better for them than "cockying" and cow-farming on those lines, and he, the manager of a couple of cheese factories, then the sooner he tells them to have nothing to do with cows the better.

Mr. MOORE: I will tell them that if you continue in power much longer.

Mr. HARTLEY: This is an instance that I came in contact with myself. At one time I had a very small business as a working engineer, and I had a few agencies.

Mr. VOWLES: A middleman? (Laughter.)

Mr. HARTLEY: Yes, a middleman. I was trying to fight the big bosses on the other side. They pretty well had me black-listed in Rockhampton, and they fetched men from as far away as Sydney with far less capabilities than I had to do jobs in Rockhampton, in order to keep me out. I do not take back anything I did against the capitalistic crowd, and I do not cry out at anything they got on me, because I always got double back on them. But at this time I had got to the pass that I thought my only hope was to battle out for myself, and I worked a few agencies. One of them was an agency for the sale of milking machines. In order to do business I travelled in the country a bit, and on one occasion I came to a farm that looked fairly prosperous. There was a fair house, the yards were all right, there seemed a fair number of cows about, and it looked like a place where I could do business: so I went up to the door and knocked, and a woman came out. We commenced a conversation. This would be about a quarter to 9. I asked the woman if there was any chance of seeing her husband, as I was travelling for various farming implements, and would like to sell him a milking machine. She said I could not do any business with them in milking machines. "How is that?" I asked. "You appear to have a good number of cows." She said, "Yes, we are milking ninety cows." I said, "It will be of great advantage to you to have a milking machine." She said, "We do not need a milking machine, as we have very much better machines than you can sell." I said, "What make of machines have you?" She said, "These are our machines," pointing to the youngsters in the room. There were four or five youngsters in the room, from about 3 feet 6 inches high to 5 feet high, and from about five years old up to nine years of age. The woman said, "They are far better milking machines than any you have got." (Opposition laughter.) She then turned to the second youngster and said, "She is the best milker, and she milks fourteen cows before breakfast." I asked, "What are they going to do now?" She

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said, "They are going to school now." A couple of miles' walk to school would not have been bad for those youngsters if they had not been up two or three hours in the early morning milking those ninety cows before breakfast. One of the big complaints that these men have against this Government with regard to school buildings is caused by those conditions. They practically want the schools to be put up against the cow-bails, so that the youngsters can go from the cow-yard into the school.

The hon. member for Pittsworth said that he had built two houses which only cost as much as one school in his district. What sort of an example is that to give? We have no idea what sort of houses they were. They might have been humpies. We have no idea of the class of labourer employed upon them—whether they were built by Chinamen, blackfellows, tradesmen, or unionists, or whether the union rate of wages was paid. An example like that

[5.30 p.m.] cannot be taken seriously by the Committee. The hon. member

also went astray in talking about the cost of everything. He said that the labour cost is so high that buildings cannot be put up in the way they ought to be. He instanced the case of the waterside workers at Bowen. As the hon. member for Bowen pointed out, the hon. member for Pittsworth has forgotten that the question of labour is not now in the hands of the big shipping companies, and other factors have come in. Better conditions have been demanded. The main object of shipping goods is not to give profits to shipping companies, but to get goods to market in a proper condition and fit for sale, so that the producers can get full value for their labour. That did not use to be the incentive before this Government came into power. I remember the loading of bananas by the use of tarpaulin slings in the old days. They simply chucked the bananas in and heaved them up. They sent the sling down into the hold, and, when it was coming up, one side of the sling would be let go and the whole lot would fall down, with the result that 50 per cent. of the bananas were destroyed by the time they got into the ship's hold. I have watched them loading tomatoes at Bowen, and contrasted the conditions with the loading of fruit in the way it used to be done in the North. At one time they would construct a wooden chute, and the man in the dray would throw the cases, either of bananas or oranges, on to the top of the chute—it was sometimes a gangway or a flat board—and, if they fell off the side and were broken to pieces, it did not matter; the grower got no compensation. That is the reason why the fruit is handled at Bowen so carefully at the present time. What the hon. member for Pittsworth has not mentioned is that the officers of the cruiser "Melbourne" testified that that boat was loaded with coal in record time at Bowen. Put that up against the statement of "Jemima" Pearce with regard to the waterside workers and see who is likely to be believed—the man who is responsible for the loading of the "Melbourne," or "Jemima" Pearce who sat in his chair and watched the loading. Then let us consider whether the cost of work has increased beyond bounds, and whether the falsely alleged "go-slow" methods of the unionists are affecting the position at all. In the old days when they used to take timber and other material

to Rockhampton, there was a lighter service down the river. The waterside workers were picked up on the wharf. They went down in the lighter. They were paid for one trip—either the trip down or the trip back—but only one way. If the steamer was delayed in getting to the Bay for half a day, or if they had to come back without loading the ship at all, they were not paid for the ten or twelve hours wasted in the Bay. It is that state of things which has led to the conditions now imposed by the unionists in order that they may have a fair deal. They should be paid from the time they leave their place or reach the wharf to do work for their employers.

I wish to speak about the item in connection with the Parliamentary Buildings. I had the privilege the other day, at the invitation of Miss Marshall, the manageress of the refreshment-room, of going through the kitchen and pantry upstairs. I congratulate the department on the very fine new cooking range that has been put there. Of course, a man's province does not extend to the kitchen—that is a place he generally keeps out of. (Laughter.)

Mr. MOORE: The supply of hot water does not seem to be good. Somebody seems to have made a mistake.

Mr. HARTLEY: If a man was employed who understood the use of the apparatus it would be a very handy thing, but it is a little bit ahead of what they require in this building.

Mr. MOORE: They cannot get the hot water.

Mr. HARTLEY: Anyone who understands the arrangement can get hot water. I am of opinion that in installing the hot-water heater and steam cooker they have overlooked the fact that it is a steam boiler, and anything that carries a pressure of 20 lb. to the square inch requires a qualified attendant. It is not an apparatus that should be looked after by females or an ordinary housekeeper, unless they have had a qualifying course in a boiler attendant's duties. It is remarkable that the attendants were required for such a long time to do duty with the old range. There is still room for improvement. The sinks in the kitchen and the wash-up room adjoining are merely wooden troughs lined with zinc. It is quite time the Government realised that it would save labour by providing up-to-date enamel sinks. The Minister might take that matter into consideration and have enamel sinks installed. The next thing I want to refer to is the lift which brings the crockery and victuals down from the kitchen to the dining-room floor, which is absolutely out-of-date.

Mr. MORGAN: Why not do away with the refreshment-room altogether? It does not pay.

Mr. HARTLEY: I am not in favour of doing away with it. I think that, when hon. members are compelled to remain here from 10 o'clock in the morning until half-past 10 at night, they are entitled to have meals provided at a small charge. I think that the amount now charged for meals is too high, and it ought to be reduced. I do not care whether the refreshment-room shows a credit balance or not; hon. members ought to be considered in that regard. I hope that the Minister will take into consideration the out-of-date class of lift between the dining-room and the kitchen, which has to

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be hauled up and down by a rope. The waitresses are on duty for long hours, and it is very hard for them to be always on their feet, and the least we can do is to provide them with an up-to-date electric lift, so that their work will be lightened in that respect. I hope that the Minister will have this attended to without delay.

Mr. RIORDAN (*Burke*): I would like to refer to remarks made by the leader of the Opposition, and I would also like to give credit to the department, where credit is due. By some stretch of imagination the hon. member seems to blame Government members for the neglected condition of the courthouse at Dalby. I do not know how he is going to hold us responsible for that. That courthouse was built fifty years ago. The hon. member was returned in 1911, and he sat behind the last Government for four years, and surely to goodness he could have prevailed on that Government to do something in regard to this matter. He said that the present Government has had a coat of paint daubed on the building here and there. I suppose that was even more than was accomplished by the Government that the hon. gentleman supported. Previously Dalby was represented for years by the Secretary for Public Lands, the late Hon. J. T. Bell. Surely, the courthouse cannot be in such a deplorable state when we have had two such gentlemen as the leader of His Majesty's Opposition and a Minister of the Crown representing the place for years! I do not doubt the hon. member's word when he talks about the accommodation and need of repair at the courthouse. I was in Dalby two or three years ago and I do not think the courthouse is suitable for a town like Dalby. Still, there are places more deserving than Dalby which require public buildings, mostly owing to the neglect of past Governments. During the past seven years, as every member of the Committee knows, the cost of material has been very high, and the departmental officials tried to avoid going on with big costly jobs while those high costs existed: but, if the Dalby courthouse is in such a state as the hon. member indicates, they would have had it rectified. I am sure that the Government do not want to see their officials working under the conditions described by the hon. member for Dalby, who stated that the officials had to pick up their papers when a sitting of the court is being held and go out into the passage to write their reports. If that sort of thing prevails in Dalby, it is not to the credit of the leader of the Opposition. I hope that the Minister will see that the workers at the Dalby courthouse have decent accommodation. A good deal has been said about the supposed advantages of the contract system over the day-labour system, hon. members opposite claiming that the contract system is the better. I have seen a fair amount of work done under both systems. I remember when the Etheridge Railway bridges were built under the contract system and I saw them rebuilt later under the day-labour system. The railway was built by contract as far as Einasleigh, and in the first storm most of the bridges were washed away. What the floods did not complete the first year so far as washing away the bridges was concerned they certainly did the second year, as they were all wiped out. The railway engineers then reconstructed the bridges under the day-labour system, and they have stood the test of all the floods ever since. In fact, they

have stood the test against bigger floods than those which washed away the previous bridges. The Babinda State Hotel also stood the test in the cyclone of 1918. That was a very severe blow, and the hotel was the means of saving the lives of the hundreds who were in the hotel that night. It also acted as a sort of base hospital for those whose homes had been blown away, and who sheltered in the hotel from the storm. Under the contract system we know that contractors often scamp their work. The contract system lends itself to men trying to make as big profits out of it as they possibly can.

Mr. MAXWELL: We have honest men in all callings.

Mr. RIORDAN: We all admit that. We know that there are honest men among contractors, but I do not know what the test of honesty is in regard to these men. They procure the cheapest material they possibly can to complete their work, and they scamp their work. The men who work for contractors also take greater risks than men working under the day-labour conditions. The hon. member for Toowong stands for the contractors all the time; in fact, he is a contractor himself. The hon. member says that the Brisbane City Council adopted the day-labour principle for the shoeing of horses, but by doing that they only deprived the blacksmith down the street of a few shillings a day. The hon. member's illustration of the blacksmith's shop is a frivolous one. It is in big undertakings that the day-labour system shows out better than the contract system. At the same time, I admire the hon. member for Toowong for his consistency in standing up for the contract system in which he believes. The hon. gentleman always stands up for the class he represents. He is not like hon. members opposite who get up here with their tongues in their cheeks and try to claim that they are half-and-half, and indifferent to this matter, while all the time they favour the contractor and the profiteer, who is anxious to make a profit out of the worker by the contract system.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS (*East Toowoomba*): I was rather struck by the remarks made by the hon. member for Fitzroy in connection with certain matters in this building. I was wondering whether they were in any way connected with the Department of Public Works or otherwise. Then there was the interjection by the Minister in charge of the Estimates in connection with the statement made by the engineer of the Water and Sewerage Board. If I know anything about the Water and Sewerage Board, I know that it is a condition of their regulations that the engineer must inspect the work. I was not on that job, but I know that the engineer would not close the job until it had been inspected.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am not referring to the work you did. I was referring to the concrete pipes.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The engineer would be very unwise if he allowed those pipes to be put together without inspection. The cost of work, whether done by day labour or contract, is going to be considerably less in the days to come; so that this vote will go considerably further than a similar amount in the past. I recognise that, under the redistribution of seats, additional schools will be brought into the East Toowoomba electorate; but, if we are not going to get greater con-

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sideration than we have got for a number of years past, it looks as if the buildings are going to be somewhat deficient. I got a promise from the Minister recently that he would have plans prepared with a view of doing certain work for the East Toowoomba school if possible. That school is the largest in the city of Toowoomba and is considerably overcrowded, as is proved by the report of the inspector who has been sent out specially on two or three occasions, and I only hope that the Minister will be able to give effect to the proposal. The Harristown school, one of the show schools of Toowoomba, has just been brought into my electorate, and it also requires some work to be done upon it. It has been brought under the notice of the Department of Public Instruction, and referred by them to the Works Department, and I hope that attention will be given to the matter.

I have discussed the question of day labour versus contract on several occasions, and I do not propose to discuss it again to-day. I recognise that the policy of the Government is to do their work by day labour. I assume that they have competent officers, and that those men are doing their work honestly, and I am standing by that. I will stand for day labour if I can get it done more efficiently than by contract, and under reasonable conditions we should get it done more efficiently, as I have said before in this Chamber, because we have to recognise that the contractor is out for a profit. No man takes a job unless he expects to make something on it. At the same time I am not going to say that a man is dishonourable because he is a contractor.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Nobody does say that.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: The Minister does not; but it is said, and I think very uncharitably and unkindly. The hon. member for Toowoomba suggested that an electric light should be placed on the staircase of the Toowoomba courthouse, which now comes into his electorate. I would suggest that, before he makes recommendations to the Minister, he should make himself conversant with the position with which he is dealing.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: The leader of the Opposition backed him up.

Mr. T. R. ROBERTS: I am not speaking for the leader of the Opposition. I am speaking as one who has a knowledge of the courthouse at Toowoomba. It is two years since the matter was referred to by me in this Chamber. I pointed out that a lady had fallen down the staircase and injured herself, and following upon that a light has already been placed on the staircase. (Opposition laughter.)

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): I should like to refer again to the hospital at Gayndah. My anxiety arises from the fact that it will be very hard for the committee to provide the necessary one-third of the £1,100 required over and above the estimated cost of the new buildings.

Mr. GLEDSON: They have to find one-third of the one-third.

Mr. CORSER: They have to find one-third of the amount, and they have always done that. It is interesting to hear hon. members talk who represent districts who do not have to build under present conditions. Other improvements are wanted at that hos-

pital. The buildings have been constructed without provision for an operating theatre, and it is hoped that both an operating theatre and an X-ray department will be provided. The necessary funds are being found by local people to make up their quota. The hospital has the advantage of having a surgeon of no small repute. In fact, right throughout his career as Government medical officer he has stood second to none in the class of work he has undertaken, and when we have in a country district a man of exceptional qualifications like Dr. Townley, who has achieved so much success in the treatment of the sick and suffering, and enjoys the confidence of the people over such a wide area, we should give him every facility for making available the benefit of the talents with which nature has endowed him, not only in medicine, but in surgery.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why do they not find their quota of the money?

Mr. CORSER: They are finding it, and up to the present they have found all the money that is wanted.

Mr. HARTLEY: What are you complaining about?

Mr. CORSER: Now that the institution has been built, it is found that a further £1,100 is required, and the local quota of one-third is demanded.

Mr. HARTLEY: You must have known you would be liable for that.

Mr. CORSER: We knew we would be liable for these things, but we did not know what the amount would be. I would like to ask the Minister what the exact amount is.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: £900.

Mr. CORSER: I am only going on the figures given to the hospital committee by the department, and if they are wrong it is just as well that I raised the point yesterday, and it is satisfactory to know

[7 p.m.] that the committee will not be called upon to find such a large amount as we expected. I was interested in the Minister's statement that the improvements to the Gayndah hospital and nurses' quarters were actually going to cost £900 in excess of the estimate.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The whole building cost £71 a square. There are eighty-eight and a-half squares. For a reinforced building of that kind, £71 a square cannot be regarded as a high cost.

Mr. CORSER: I am not referring to that; I am referring to the excess over the estimate, one-third of which will have to be provided by the hospital committee. The Minister's reply to my question this afternoon indicated that £1,100 would be the amount in excess of the estimate. The hon. gentleman contradicted my statement last night, when I said that £1,100 was the amount.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Minister's statement related only to the hospital, and not to the nurses' quarters.

Mr. CORSER: We were speaking of the whole of the buildings. Last night, when I made a statement with regard to the cost of the hospital, the Minister told me how far I was out. I now find that my figure was right. The exact price was £8,479 6s. 10d. I hope that the Government will put aside some of the £140,000, the balance of the proceeds of "Golden Caskets," to cover the

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necessary quota of the extra cost required from the hospital committee.

Mr. GLEDSON: You would not touch that money, would you?

Mr. CORSER: If the hospital committee have to find that amount, it will prevent the money being used in other essential work, such as providing an operating theatre.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I find that there was a credit that had not been taken into account when giving a reply this afternoon. The net figure is £998 on the two jobs, one-third of which will be £332.

Mr. CORSER: Then the hon. gentleman's statement to the hospital committee was not correct, and his statement this afternoon was not correct. However, I accept his apology. (Laughter.)

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I am merely putting you right.

Mr. CORSER: If I am wrong, it is on the information I got from the hon. gentleman and the letters which were received by the institution. Although some hon. members on this side might not believe it, I believe that the Minister would have divulged the right figures before the hospital committee were called upon to pay. Whilst I have not very much to complain about in regard to educational facilities and improvements to schools in my district, there is a certain number of schools that still want enlarging. In the summer months in the small schools the heat is excessive, and being out-of-date buildings the lighting and ventilation are not of the best. I hope that the department will speed up in regard to providing better facilities for teaching children in country districts, and will make the necessary improvements to enable the teachers to have the necessary comfort essential in giving the children the education that they need. I hope the department will go on with those matters.

Mr. HARTLEY: We will keep on going on.

Mr. CORSER: The Government have not very long to go. They will keep on going on as soon as the elections are on.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: When will that be?

Mr. CORSER: It all depends on circumstances. Hon. members opposite would find it very hard to answer that question at the present time. Some appropriation should be made for the purpose of constructing a courthouse and lands office in the town of Mundubbera, which is now in a prosperous centre.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Surely, the hon. gentleman does not want a courthouse there?

Mr. CORSER: An acting clerk of petty sessions has been holding courts there, and I dare say that even Mundubbera desires a courthouse. The prosperous and growing town of Mundubbera will make such headway as to warrant the construction of Government buildings that are generally constructed in towns of such importance.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): I have listened all day to speeches delivered by hon. members, more particularly by hon. members opposite. They have endeavoured to criticise the method under which the work is carried out by the department. After listening to their speeches, I am convinced that they have no criticism to offer, but that the debate has developed into a discussion on

day labour versus contract. A number of hon. members opposite do not understand what they are talking about when discussing those two systems. As a matter of fact, all the big schools, courthouses, and technical colleges have been built under the contract system. A firm, by taking a big contract, was able to obtain sufficient money, not only to pay for the wages of the men employed and the other costs connected with the construction of the building, but was able to make something out of the people of Queensland. That method has been altered by this Government. Hon. members opposite are not concerned about the men giving value for the work they do, but they are concerned about their friends not getting the large profits they were previously able to get by being able to take contracts at a good price. All big works are carried out by day labour, because the man who takes a contract employs day labour to do the work, and the only question we have to consider in connection with this matter is whether the people of Queensland are to get the value of the labour performed by the workers, or whether we are going to allow some persons to come along and make fortunes out of the construction of these works, as they did in the past. Hon. members opposite are not objecting to day labour, but they object because their friends are unable to take contracts and make big profits, which enable them to contribute to their electioneering funds, as the big financial institutions do. The Country party are complaining that they are not getting sufficient funds, and we find, from what the Secretary for Public Works stated, that they are getting assistance from the South. Then they complain that the graziers are not contributing a sufficient amount to their electioneering funds. The graziers only contributed £2,000 towards their last election expenses, and they say that is not sufficient from such a wealthy body as the graziers.

I cannot say that I have had a great deal to do with the department, because during the régime of the present Government there have not been many buildings erected in my district. With what buildings they have put up I have no fault to find, because the Government have carried out the work very well. One building constructed by this Government was the West Ipswich school. That was a very difficult job, and they did the work very well. The Minister has stated that we are going to have some work done at Silkstone, and I hope that that will be commenced shortly. Then, again, the Technical College at Ipswich has been in need of repairs for a good many years, and I hope the Minister will take heed of what I am saying and see, not only that an amount is placed on the Estimates for that purpose, but that the work will be commenced as early as possible.

THE SECRETARY FOR PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: It will be commenced during this financial year.

Mr. GLEDSON: I am very glad to hear that, as it is very much needed. Members of the Opposition have not criticised the department for the work that has been done. They have not been able to find fault with anything the department has done. Last year they found fault because, as they stated, the work in outside places was costing too much, and they have attempted to show that some of the work now being done by the department

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could be done by contract. I know that the Government, in outside places, have authorised school committees to do certain work. I have been on a committee myself which has undertaken certain work on behalf of the Government, and the necessary funds have been made available. Hon. members opposite have had the same opportunity to get work done. If they get their school committees to recommend certain work that is required, the Government are quite willing for those small jobs to be done by the committees.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): The hon. member for Ipswich has stated that we have not criticised the buildings that have been constructed by the department. I do not think anybody has anything to say against the work that has been carried out except that it has cost too much. Because a man takes a contract it does not mean that he is going to sweat the workers or speed them up. It means efficient management, and that a man has the material on hand ready for the men to work. How many times have we seen public schools in course of erection where men have had to wait two or three days for material? That is where the waste of public money comes in in a great many cases. You have all sorts of delays taking place. The great thing in contract work is efficient management and having proper labour-saving machinery. I cannot speak about contract work in the town, but I can speak in connection with country schools. We had the hon. member for Toowoomba admitting to-day that the men loafed on the job in connection with the Jondaryn school, the estimate in connection with which was £1,480. It was going to take ten weeks to complete, but it took about ten months, and the estimate was only exceeded by £2. The hon. member for Toowoomba said the men loafed on the job, and that shows that there must have been something wrong in connection with that work.

Mr. GLEDSON: Do you say that it took ten months to complete a £1,400 job? They must have been paid big wages.

Mr. MOORE: No, it was your Government which carried out the work. The delay was due to strikes.

Mr. GLEDSON: You don't say that they took ten months to do it?

Mr. MOORE: It took ten months to complete the work. I do not say that the men were working all the time.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is a different thing.

Mr. MOORE: I say that, after that delay, the estimate was only exceeded by £2.

Mr. GLEDSON: Did the State get value for the money spent?

Mr. MOORE: I do not think they did. I say that, if the school had been built by contract, the cost would have been a great deal less. I would like the Minister to give us the estimate of the department for glassing in of the Oakey school residence, and what the contract price was; also the estimate for pulling down the Maclagan school and removing it to North Maclagan, and the amount of the tender which was put in for the work; also the estimate for pulling down and re-erection of school from Cattle Gully to Narko. In the case of the work at Cattle Gully school and at North Maclagan, the work has been done and paid for, and the estimate of the department was over 100 per

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cent. higher than the contract price. We cannot afford to carry out small works in the country at such a high cost as that.

Mr. HARTLEY: What about the quality of the work?

Mr. MOORE: The secretary of the school committee was an official of the miners' union, and surely he would see that the work was carried out properly.

Mr. GLEDSON: That is probably the reason why it was well done.

Mr. MOORE: They were not satisfied to pay the price involved by day labour, but insisted on having the work carried out by contract because they had to pay half for it, and they had the work done efficiently. The Department of Public Instruction should not have to go to the Department of Public Works and ask whether a school should be erected or not. The Department of Public Instruction should have full control, and, if a school is required in a country district, it should not be in the power of the Department of Public Works to counteract that decision and to say that the school must not be built.

Mr. GLEDSON: You give the Department of Public Works the money and they will build all the schools.

Mr. MOORE: I say that the Department of Public Works has money to build all the schools required to-day provided the work is carried out in an economical manner, and not as it is being done to-day. The Department of Public Instruction should not be mixed up with the Department of Public Works at all. If work is carried on in an economical way, the Department of Public Works has funds to do all that is required. But at present, when the Department of Public Instruction says that schools are required in certain districts, the Department of Public Works says they are required somewhere else.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Department of Public Works does not do that; it simply carries out the work.

Mr. MOORE: I could give an instance where the Department of Public Works did not have to spend any money at all. Eighteen months ago the people in Haden were endeavouring to secure a school for vocational classes. These are the despised dairy farmers whom the hon. member for Fitzroy talked about who want a school built alongside their cowbails so that the children can go straight into the school after milking the cows. They were very keen upon getting the school for their children and subscribed amongst themselves all the money required to build it.

Mr. HARTLEY: They must be a peculiar class of farmer.

Mr. MOORE: We have plenty of them in my district.

Mr. HARTLEY: They have come to light under a Labour Government.

Mr. MOORE: This is the only Government who insist on these people subscribing the money themselves. No other Government would ask them to do it, because in a scattered district like that the Government would pay the money. The people, however, subscribed the money themselves, and they are putting up their own building. They subscribed the money eighteen months ago, and they have been waiting right on till

to-day to go on with that work. They are going to do the work themselves.

Mr. HARTLEY: Do you say that the people subscribed the money to build a State school themselves?

Mr. MOORE: It is a building that is joined on to a State school for vocational classes.

Mr. HARTLEY: The same system applies all over the State.

Mr. MOORE: Do you suggest that the people in Brisbane have to subscribe towards any additions to the technical college here? Do you suggest that the people have to pay one-third of the cost of the rural school at Nambour, or the rural school at Boonah?

Mr. GLEDSON: They had to pay portion of the cost of the technical college at Ipswich.

Mr. MOORE: It might be done in some places, but there are a lot of places where it has not been done.

Mr. HARTLEY: It was done in connection with the Rockhampton Technical College.

Mr. MOORE: Well, it was done by these people in my electorate, and I do not think it is a fair thing at all. The hon. member for Fitzroy talked about the unfortunate dairy farmers who had to work their children.

Mr. HARTLEY: I did not say they were unfortunate.

Mr. MOORE: But I say they are unfortunate. They were not allowed by the Government to get the price for their produce that they could have got, and they had to get their children to assist them. We know that the primary producers lost £242,000 last year, according to the report of the Butter Committee, as a result of the action of this price-fixing Government. That is why those unfortunate people are in that position.

Mr. HARTLEY: That does not excuse them for child slavery in their own homes.

Mr. MOORE: If hon. members opposite had stood up for the principles they advocate, and seen that the primary producers got the full reward of their labour, they would not have to employ their children at all.

Mr. COLLINS: We are the only people who say that they should get the full reward of their labour.

Mr. MOORE: Instead of standing up for these people, members assisted the Government to sacrifice them for six years, and then hon. members opposite come here and sneer at them because, in some cases, they have to get their children to help them to make a living.

Mr. COLLINS: There are no children working on the canefields.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member for Fitzroy said that the dairy farmers wanted the school erected alongside the cow-bail, so that the children could go from the milking yard into the school. These things always come home to roost. If you are going to treat people in that way, you only put them in the unfortunate position they are in to-day.

I want to draw the attention of the Minister to the state of the courthouse at Oakey. I have been to the Department of Justice on two or three occasions. I have not been to the Minister in charge of the Department of Public Works, because I

consider that if I go to the Attorney-General it should be sufficient. The courthouse at Oakey is in an awkward position.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: I did not think you needed any courthouse in those places.

Mr. MOORE: Unfortunately, we do.

Mr. CORSER: There are some Government supporters there.

Mr. MOORE: A policeman may have to take an unruly "drunk" to the courthouse, and it is most difficult to get him across the railway.

Mr. BRENNAN: Why not go through the gates?

Mr. MOORE: You cannot; they are never open. The courthouse is in such an unsatisfactory position that time after time cases have had to be stopped during the whistling and shunting of trains.

Mr. HARTLEY: Why not stop the trains?

Mr. MOORE: It is a main line, with two branch lines diverging there, and the reasonable thing is to shift the courthouse. That has been asked on several occasions.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It has not come before me.

Mr. MOORE: It should have come before the hon. member, because there have been repeated requests by the Chamber of Commerce, myself, and others. Trains are there all day, because there are these branch lines, and there is probably shunting all day.

If the department are confirmed in the intention to go on with the building of schools by day labour, why not standardise them and send them all up in trucks as they do with those houses that are being built ready to erect by Messrs. Brown and Broad? The workshops are here, and they could cut the whole thing out. It could all be sent up in one or two trucks, and there would be no delay in waiting for timber. I know that on several occasions I have seen delays caused because 500 or 600 feet of timber has been sent up on one day, and then perhaps after two or three days some more timber, and probably the wrong timber has been sent first. It would be far more economical to have standardised schools, and they would be erected far more quickly than at present.

Mr. HARTLEY: That is one way of encouraging local industry.

Mr. MOORE: How many of these schools encourage local industry? The men are sent up from other districts.

Mr. HARTLEY: Not under this Government.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member is talking arrant rubbish. There is no need to go beyond the cost of these little fowl-houses—because some of them are practically that—of about 13 feet by 14 feet.

Mr. HARTLEY: Half the hon. members on your side are recommending that they should be built by the school committee in the locality.

Mr. MOORE: I do not recommend that any of these schools should be built out of loan money unless there is a proper sinking fund. It is most absurd for a State like Queensland to build wooden schools out of loan money, and, when they are worn out and there is nothing to show for them, borrow more money to build others. There should be a sinking fund to wipe out the loan in the life of the school, say, in forty

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or fifty years. The present practice cannot be defended in any way whatever.

Mr. HARTLEY: Nobody recommended that. Your own members want them to be built by the men in the locality in which they are.

Mr. MOORE: You cannot cut timber in the locality.

Mr. HARTLEY: They are recommending it.

Mr. MOORE: You cannot get galvanised iron in the locality. You have to send it up there.

Mr. HARTLEY: It is bought in our district in Rockhampton. We object to having it all sent up from Brisbane.

Mr. MOORE: It is a very extraordinary way. No wonder the buildings cost so much.

Mr. HARTLEY: It costs less than sending it from Brisbane.

Mr. MOORE: The expense at the present time is out of all proportion to the benefit we get. We know that the money which is available could give a great deal more benefit than we are getting. It only needs better and more efficient management. I say that Queensland is not in a position to carry out its public works in a certain way merely for political reasons. We have not the money to waste. I have seen

[7.30 p.m.] tenders, and the departmental estimates for that work, and it can be proved that the work cost 100 per cent. more than it should. It is time it was stopped. My only experience of day work has been an unfortunate one. In the shire council of which I am chairman, we had day work for years, and continued it as long as possible.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: We have had the same debate on this vote for years.

Mr. MOORE: A good thing will bear repeating. If, by perpetually dripping, we can get a little sense into the Minister's head, the time will not have been wasted.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: It would not be possible to put anything into your head; it is too dense.

Mr. MOORE: I am endeavouring to show the Minister that Queensland cannot afford to continue working on this principle. If he were using his own money he would admit the soundness of our contention; but because it is public money he thinks he is at liberty to carry out works in the most expensive instead of in the most economical way. It is not a fair thing to the State.

Instead of giving details in regard to the economical management and efficiency of the work carried out, the Minister gave a long dissertation to-day on something that he thought was a revelation. The whole thing had been printed in the papers before; it was not new.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: That is not true.

Mr. MOORE: There is no more in it than there is in the resolutions which were passed by the Labour Conference last October, or not so much—as we are not bound by a conference and you are. The Minister said, "Suppose this was brought in, how would we be able to get money to build schools?" Supposing the socialisation of industry was brought about—supposing we had production for use and not for profit—how would we get the money with which to build schools? The Premier, at that conference, said that the thing was impossible and voted

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against it, and it was carried in spite of him. If that system is introduced, where will the money come from with which to build schools?

Mr. GLEDSON: There will be schools for everybody.

Mr. MOORE: There would be nobody to go to them in a few years; we would get back to a state of savagery.

Mr. GLEDSON: We would get into a state of civilisation.

Mr. MOORE: I do not think we would. We have in Russia an example of the working of the system. I do not think the hon. member for Bowen believes in that principle, though he may talk very loudly about it. I am perfectly certain that the hon. member for Toowoomba does not. Any sensible man must know the hopeless position the State would get into. We have already gone two or three steps on the road towards it, and look at the position we are in! We are worse than any other State in Australia.

Mr. HARTLEY: We are in a better position than any other State in the Commonwealth. Our credit is better.

Mr. MOORE: Are we in the best position in being the most heavily taxed State in Australia?

Mr. PEASE: That is not right; you cannot prove it.

Mr. MOORE: It is easy to prove.

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

Mr. W. COOPER (*Rosewood*): I have listened to hon. members with a certain amount of surprise. I have wondered, if the Works Department carried out the propositions they have suggested, where we would be able to get the money.

Mr. J. JONES: America.

Mr. W. COOPER: We might do that with some advantage. Listening to the charges made against the Works Department in regard to the cost of erection of public buildings, one would think that the men who had erected those buildings, or the department that established the day-labour system, had acted detrimentally to the interests of the people of Queensland and of the department itself. The contention is, not that the day-labour system is inferior to the contract system, but that they have not had a sufficient number of buildings erected in their own electorates. I have had some experience as a workman under both contract and day labour. I never was a contractor, and I have no desire to be one, judging from the experience I have had of contractors for whom I have worked. I remember in my early days the old Government contractor was considered to be a man of some importance, because he could get his friends in Parliament to recommend that he should get certain contracts. He extracted large sums of money from the coffers of the State Treasury. We have not heard anything regarding the relative quality of the work done under the day-labour system and under contract. There are such things as skew nails in studs; there are such things as provisions in specifications for those studs to be tenoned, and the ground-plates and wall-plates mortised. What do we find? Unless the closest inspection is kept upon contractors generally, some inferior class of work will be put into those buildings. I remember having seen a building put up under the contract system.

A bit of a blow came along and the roof was carried away. I took the trouble to go and inspect that building, because I did not think that any building should have been carried away with the force of the wind which was blowing that day. I found that the smallest wire nails were used in the rafters. I examined the studs, and I found that every second stud on the top was skewed, and on the bottom they were fastened in the same manner. The same thing applies to other contracts, such as bridge-building, railway construction, road work, and everything else that is done under the contract system. A complaint was raised in Sydney regarding a state of affairs which was a standing disgrace to the contractors who built some of the ships for the Commonwealth Government. The inquiry will be remembered at which it was revealed that, instead of rivets being placed in those boats, there were dummies.

Mr. GLEDSON: Gambling with the lives of the workers.

Mr. W. COOPER: The contractor who will gamble with the lives of seamen in that way deserves no consideration. Fortunately for the engineers and able-bodied seamen, some of those ships did not get the opportunity of going to sea before the flaw was discovered. I have had a fair amount of experience, particularly in connection with railway construction, and I have been in a position to be able to inspect material for that work which was constructed under the contract system. I have had an opportunity of inspecting the bolts to be placed in the bridges. These bolts were made under the contract system, and I was placed in the painful position of having to take the bolts and break them across the anvil and refuse to allow them to be put in the bridges. Apart from the inferior work done under the contract system, there is a tendency on the part of workmen to make a name for themselves by going as fast as possible and doing as much slumwork as it is possible to do. Hon. members opposite have stated that the department have not endeavoured to cope with the growing necessity for the erection of school buildings in order to enable country children reasonable opportunity of receiving that standard of education which is afforded to children in the cities. I quite agree with hon. members who say that country children should receive the same educational facilities that are offered to children in the cities. My experience has been that the Department of Public Works and the Department of Public Instruction, under the control of the respective Ministers, have endeavoured to do all that was possible under the circumstances to give the same educational facilities to children in the country as has been afforded to children in the cities. Some hon. members have stated that the life of a wooden building is about twenty years, and that it requires painting every five years. One hon. member went so far as to say that a building should be painted every three years. He must have been accustomed to having his buildings erected under the contract system if they required painting every three years. There are such things as two classes of painters and two classes of paint. There are the fraudulent and the genuine classes of painter and paint. I would not advise any hon. member opposite who advocates the contract system to stand against a wall or fence which has been painted with white paint under the contract

system. I guarantee that there would be no paint left on the wall or fence, because it would be all on his back. Some hon. members opposite claim that more attention has been given to the erection of schools and other public buildings in the electorates of Government members than in the electorates of hon. members opposite.

Mr. BRENNAN: You have not been badly treated.

Mr. W. COOPER: That is very true. No doubt, I am more energetic than the hon. member for Toowoomba. If he has not done as well as I have, then I am sorry that he has not the same amount of energy as I have got. The Minister has done everything possible with the money at his disposal. For at least twenty years before I became the representative of my electorate, the public buildings in that electorate had not received an ounce of paint, and they were in a dilapidated state, no doubt due to the neglect of past Governments. To-day the schools in the Rosewood electorate are being brought up to date, but there are still some requiring a little attention. I am not going to use the parish pump, as the hon. member for Burke said most hon. members opposite were doing. I am satisfied with the treatment I have received at the hands of the Secretary for Public Works and the Secretary for Public Instruction.

Mr. DEACON: What is the hon. member growling about? (Laughter.)

Mr. W. COOPER: There is no doubt I have done some growling, but I did not start like the hon. member did. The hon. member for Aubigny claims that he can get contractors in his electorate to erect buildings infinitely cheaper than they can be erected by the department. I would like to ask the hon. member if he had a house to build, whether he would allow it to be built under the contract system or whether he would have it built under the day-labour system?

Mr. MOORE: I have had three houses built under the contract system.

Mr. W. COOPER: The first thing the hon. member would do would be to call for tenders for the building.

Mr. MOORE: The hon. member is wrong.

Mr. W. COOPER: What would the hon. member do?

Mr. MOORE: I would go to the contractor and ask him what he would do it for.

Mr. W. COOPER: And give him whatever he liked? The hon. member's looks deceive him. I never anticipated that he was a philanthropist. He would have to adopt the day-labour system to carry out that contract. I understand perfectly well why hon. members on the other side want everything done by contract. It is because they want to lengthen the hours that the men have to work. That is the trouble under all contracts. A man taking a contract will endeavour to put in as much time as he possibly can on the job. I would not mind if the contractor himself worked longer hours; but the unfortunate thing is that the contractors endeavour to get in the thin end of the wedge, so that their workmen will be compelled to work all the hours of daylight that God has given us, and a little bit longer, too, if they can. Another reason why these men want contracts is because of the fact that any little alteration necessary in the specifications brings them a large profit.

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Why did previous Governments abandon the old system of building railways by contract? It was because, no matter how well the specifications might have been drawn up, it was always found necessary to alter the specifications when the actual work was being done, and that was the time for the contractor to make his harvest. There is not the slightest doubt that railways built under day labour, and also buildings constructed under day labour, have a longer life than when they are constructed under the contract system. The day-labour system is the cheapest, it gives the most value, and the work is more faithfully performed.

HON. J. G. APPEL (*Albert*): I am sure we are all very much indebted to the Secretary for Public Works for the manner in which he may be said to have cleared the atmosphere by the startling revelations which he made to-day. I am only sorry that he did not complete the clearing of the atmosphere and make still further revelations, by stating the amount which his party funds received from John Wren for the action they have taken in connection with proprietary racecourses, and the amount paid into his party funds from the liquor trade of Brisbane for the failure of his party to take action in connection with that particular trade. If the hon. gentleman had done that, then I alone should not have thanked him for the revelation he did make, but I am sure the electors of Queensland would have thanked him for these further revelations, which certainly would have been to the discredit of himself and his party.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: What about that letter which you wrote to the Germans in 1893, in which you referred to them as your fellow countrymen?

HON. J. G. APPEL: What countryman is the hon. gentleman?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: My country is all right.

HON. J. G. APPEL: By his surname and by his brogue, you would never take him for a Scotchman—(Government laughter)—and certainly by his manner and by his insinuations he is not worthy of being a Scotchman.

MR. F. A. COOPER: What about your dirty, rotten insinuations?

HON. J. G. APPEL: What about yours? Who goes to the railway workers and tries to crawl to them after taking the action you did? (Interruption.)

MR. COLLINS (*Bowen*): I rise to a point of order. Is the hon. member for Albert in order in referring to the hon. member for Bremer as "a thing like that?"

THE CHAIRMAN: If the hon. member for Albert made a remark like that, he certainly is not in order.

HON. J. G. APPEL: If I made any unparliamentary remark I withdraw it, because my intention in rising was simply to congratulate the hon. gentleman for the revelations which he had made, and to regret that he did not make further revelations, which we were all anxious to hear of.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I look upon you as being beneath contempt.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I can afford to treat with contempt anything the hon. gentleman says in connection with that matter. My record is sufficiently well known, and I

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require nothing from the hon. gentleman who has made that interjection.

It appears to me that a good deal of difficulty is caused by the fact that this vote to some extent is controlled by two departments. Apparently, there is no co-ordination between the two departments. The Department of Public Instruction may consider a job to be urgently necessary; but, apparently, it does not follow that the Works Department is prepared to carry out that particular work. With reference to the question of day labour or contract labour, if the organisation is complete it frequently happens that day labour is as effective as contract labour. As a matter of fact, the previous Administration established workshops in connection with the Department of Public Works and engaged a staff of men, who undertook a considerable amount of repair work and the manufacture of furniture which was required by the different Government departments. In that connection, if the organisation is effective, it is a matter of indifference to me how the work is carried out, so long as it is carried out; but, apparently, the organisation is defective, and, consequently, the cost of buildings has very materially increased. For instance, the sending of timber from Brisbane for many miles to the terminus of a railway, and then carting it miles to the site of a particular building, passing a sawmill en route where the necessary timber could have been procured, necessarily very considerably increases the cost so far as the timber is concerned.

MR. GLEDSON: That is not what the hon. member for Aubigny said.

HON. J. G. APPEL: I am stating my own case. In most of these buildings, for argument let us class the timber as No. 1 timber, No. 2 timber, and No. 3 timber, and we find that the No. 1 timber, which is required first, is frequently not sent forward in sufficient quantities, and the No. 2 timber is on the job before the No. 1 timber. The men are on the job for the purpose of carrying out the work, and, owing to the lack of material, the work is delayed, and this causes further expense. I am

[8 p.m.] glad to hear that the Minister intends to authorise the local school committees to carry out small jobs. The committee of the State school at Southport brought under my notice the fact that they had reported to the department that a stump under the school building was decayed, and that it could be replaced at a cost of 19s. A reply was received that the matter would receive consideration. The department incurred the expense of sending an inspector down there, and then the committee received a communication from the department that the work was approved, and would be carried out. The carpenter from Brisbane caught the early train, and had to be paid from the time he left his home. He started work in Southport after the lunch hour. He worked the next day, and finished on the third day, and he then received payment for the time occupied in reaching his home at Taringa. It took three days to have the work carried out, and, as the department had also to purchase the material, the cost incurred by the department meant much more than the sum of 19s., which was the amount of the tender for replacing the stump. We only point these things out to the department for the purpose of economising as much as possible.

so that a larger amount of work can be carried out. An expenditure such as I have referred to is not necessary. We point out these things to the department so that mistakes of that kind may be obviated in future. I am glad to know that it will be the policy of the department in future to allow small alterations like that to be carried out on the spot.

Mr. F. A. COOPER (*Bremer*): After hearing the hon. member for Albert address the Committee one is impressed with the fact that, when an hon. member talks for talking's sake, it generally leads to his not knowing when his time is finished and when it is not. It also gives us an idea of the confusion of thought which exists among hon. members opposite, who never seem to be settled in their opinions. Politically, they are Vicars of Bray, so far as their policy is concerned, and they are Vicars of Bray in other ways. Whatever may be the dominant cry, they desire to be in accord with it, and in some cases, whatever the dominant nationality may be, they also desire to be in accord with it. The hon. member for Aubigny struck perhaps a rather good note. He pointed out that the grave error in connection with day labour, from his standpoint, is not the work of the workmen, but the work of the supervisors, officers, and people in charge. There has been from the other side no condemnation whatever of the system of day labour. There has merely been a wholesale ill-considered and ill-digested condemnation of the supervision of day labour. I can find nothing else in the remarks of hon. members opposite. It seems to me a remarkable thing why, if one man supervises work, men cannot do the work in the same efficient manner and at the same cost as if it is supervised by another man. That is the whole difference between the day-labour system and the contract system. It simply means that in one instance the work is supervised by a man who is out for his own profit and in the other instance by a man who should be out for the profit of the State; and if, as the Minister assures us, his officers are out for the benefit of the State, no argument can impress me that the contract system is better than the day-labour system.

Mr. MOORE: I have proved it. I have asked you to give instances to the contrary.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: You have not proved it, any more than the hon. member for Albert proved his bold assertions about money which is alleged to have come to this party from certain sources. No money from John Wren, the publicans, or the Licensed Victuallers' Association, or from any other such quarter, has found its way into the Labour party's funds. The hon. member for Aubigny tried to convince the Committee that the whole of the quotations that were read by the Minister earlier in the day were published broadcast in the papers. Does he say that the statement that Mr. Garbutt said that every Northern member would be obliged to vote to refund all the money taken from pastoral lessees by this so-called policy of repudiation was published broadcast?

Mr. MOORE: I read it in the Press.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: What the hon. member means is that he read it in the minute-book of the executive of his party organisation.

Mr. MOORE: I have not read the minute-book.

Mr. PEASE: Your leader repudiated the whole thing. He washed his hands, like Pilate, and said there was no stain on him.

Mr. F. A. COOPER: I want to say a word about the North Ipswich State School in the Bremer electorate. That school has received a little attention of late from the Works Department, and I am very thankful for that consideration. An addition has been made to the school. It is a grave matter of opinion in the electorate as to whether it is a good addition or not. Authorities in the department and outside vary in opinion. The authorities in the department say that it is a good building, and that it will be cool and well ventilated in the summer time; but some architects outside have condemned it lock, stock, and barrel. They say it will be a furnace and ill-ventilated in the summer time, and a menace to the children. I hope the Lord will send us a hot summer, so that I can accuse one set of authorities or the other of having no accurate knowledge. I would like to produce a little further evidence in connection with the day-labour system; and, if we all look round our own towns, we can get the evidence there. The Ipswich City Council recently decided to throw over its day-labour system in connection with the sanitary work. It was sick and tired of death of spending money on men who would not work, and so they decided to cut out day labour in connection with the sanitary work, and hand it over to the contractors, who do everything so well and wonderfully cheap. They called tenders, but the work is still being done by day labour, and being done very efficiently under that system. Contractors cannot be found who can do the work as thoroughly and cheaply as it has been done under the day-labour system in Ipswich.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH (*Mackay*): The hon. member for Aubigny made some rather sweeping statements in the course of his remarks this evening about some work which he said had been carried out in his electorate. He complained that the Maclagan school job was a costly one.

Mr. MOORE: I only asked you to give the figures.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: That was the subject matter of his complaint. The cost of the work was £681.

Mr. MOORE: I referred to the pulling down of the old Maclagan school and shifting it to North Maclagan. You are dodging it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Then the hon. member said that charges were made for certain work for which he said tenders were put in to the department. I have discussed this matter with the officers of my department, but they have no knowledge of any tenders being called for the work at all.

Mr. MOORE: That work is finished.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: If there is anything in the hon. member's statements at all, he is digging up ancient history which has nothing to do with matters under the control of the present Government at all.

Mr. MOORE: Give the figures! You are squibbing on it.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Albert made certain sweeping

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statements in his usual vulpine style. He referred to John Wren and the Brewers' Association. I wish to say that, so far as this party is concerned, it is not necessary to deny any charges of that kind. The funds of this party are very meagre. They are subscribed by the various unions and the industrial workers belonging to the different organisations. If the hon. member for Albert has any evidence of that kind to bring forward, I challenge him to do it. Bald statements are of no value in this Chamber. Any man can put forward bald statements, but what we ask for to-night and what we have a right to ask for is this: If there is anything behind the innuendoes of the hon. member for Albert, then let him come forward like a man and give evidence in support of them.

GOVERNMENT MEMBERS: Hear, hear!

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: Further reference was made to what is called the extravagance of this Government. In reference to the documents of the Queensland Country party I find another interesting statement very apropos of this very question. They were discussing the question of extravagance on the part of the Federal Government, and I find that Mr. Garbutt justified it in this way—

"Criticisms of extravagance were all very well and very easy and very much the function of every Opposition, but they must remember that the whole country practically compelled the Hughes Government into its heavy expenditure on returned soldiers and other matters."

So we see that criticism, looked at from the Country party point of view, is not looked upon seriously. It is looked upon as a function of the Opposition to criticise. I well remember when the ex-member for Burrum was in the House. He was a very able man in his own way, and he was deputy leader of the Opposition. He said he was not here to criticise, but he was here to condemn.

In the course of his remarks the hon. member for Albert made some remarks that cannot be described as being in good taste. So far as I am personally concerned, I do not look upon any nationality as being much better than another, and, in any case, no individual chooses his ancestors.

HON. J. G. APPEL: Then your first remarks were in worse taste.

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: It does not matter what nationality a man belongs to, he should not be ashamed of his nationality. I would like to quote from a leaflet, "Patriotism as we find it." It is dated 13th May, 1893, and is addressed to the electors of Nundah. It reads—

"To the electors of Nundah.

"As a candidate for the next election of our representative for the electorate of Nundah, I take the liberty of asking for your votes and depend upon your support, because I am the son of a man whose cradle, the same as yours, stood in the German fatherland.

"To the most of you I am known since the days of my early infancy. As the son of a German farmer, I have always been so thoroughly impressed with the fact of my belonging to the German nation that I have made it my duty to learn the German language, and now speak and understand it.

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"From political convictions I have ever belonged to the Liberal party, and am opposed to every monopoly, as well as against syndicates created by men without honest conscience, who want to again bring back Queensland to the state of early days—a huge sheep walk.

"I believe that our beautiful colony must be settled with that class of farmer to whom my father and you belong, who have contributed more than anything else to bring the land to its present state of development. I do not believe in land grant railways nor in black labour, because I feel that this, my native land, can only become a great country through the labours of her white people."

Very laudable! It continues—

"I am for a protectionist policy, which will create markets for the products of our farmers, and which will encourage our sons to settle on the land.

"I am, further, against additional taxation at present, because I believe that with proper economy and retrenchment there will be sufficient means to cover cost of government.

"As you know, I have great interests in the country, and will, if elected, do my best to create prosperity. My services will be at all times at your disposal, and as I count nearly all of you as my friends, you can not only speak to me as your representative, but as your friend, and in your mother tongue.

"Different other political points I will explain to you when I have the honour to address you personally.

"I sign, gentlemen,

"Your obedient servant,

"J. GEORGE APPEL."

(Government laughter.)

MR. VOWLES: What has this got to do with the Estimates for the Department of Public Works?

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member for Albert cannot object to being reminded of these things. Later on in 1915 he repudiated this and claimed to be a descendant of the French Huguenots! I would remind the hon. gentleman that "consistency is a jewel." It is very out of place to find the hon. member for Albert to-day coming forward making allegations against this party, using all kinds of innuendoes against this party, without backing it up by one scintilla of evidence. The hon. gentleman is often posing as the patriot. He poses as the pure-bred merino Imperialist.

HON. J. G. APPEL: You are a flamboyant quacksalver. Neither by your brogue nor your manner would you be taken for a Scotchman. (Loud Opposition laughter.)

HON. W. FORGAN SMITH: I hope that in future, when the hon. member is addressing this Chamber, his remarks will be in ordinary good taste.

MR. J. JONES (*Kennedy*): In listening to hon. members opposite, I notice that they have been expressing satisfaction with the treatment they have received from this department. The hon. member for Herbert, speaking on the Address in Reply, said he was quite satisfied with the Department of Public Instruction because he got everything he asked for. It is quite the reverse with me, because everything that I have asked for I have not got. I have only asked for three or four small things, but I have not

got them. Anyone travelling along the Northern Railway might know a place called "Macrossan." There is a little school there. If a man who owned a cattle station did not provide better accommodation than that for his workers, he would get six months. Yet this school is supposed to provide shelter for the children. There is no veranda to it, and no shade at all. It seems strange to me that Government members can get all they ask for and I can get nothing. I cannot get anything done to that school. Why is it? Is it because I belong to that enemy of the Government, the squatter? Is that the reason that I get nothing? It does not look too good. In regard to the question of day labour versus contract, I think we should give the contract system a trial occasionally as a check on the day-labour system. I quite realise that the "go slow" policy is dying away. The sensible workers are beginning to realise that it is no good, and they have cut it out. A couple of years ago there was a lot of "go slow" because the extremists were leading the big body of the men. They are cutting it out because people are coming to recognise that Queensland is not benefiting by it.

I want to make myself clear with regard to the repudiatory legislation of this Government. Whenever I have an opportunity, as a supporter of any party, to repeal that legislation, I shall take it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Will you give back the money?

Mr. J. JONES: There is no occasion to give back the money. Why not give the men longer leases? (Government laughter.) I say there is no necessity for a refund.

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: Then you say that the leases should be extended?

Mr. J. JONES: The repudiatory legislation of the Government does not affect me, because I appealed against the decision of the Land Court and my appeal was upheld; but I am speaking in the interests of the people who have not been so fortunate. We know that there are companies which have made fortunes, but, in order to make those big companies pay heaps of money, the Government are prepared to sacrifice thousands of people who own only a few head of cattle. What about their State stations?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I do not wish to restrict the hon. member unduly, but the hon. member is hardly in order in discussing the Land Act Amendment Act on this vote.

Mr. J. JONES: I want to make myself clear on that point.

Mr. HARTLEY: You made yourself very clear.

Mr. J. JONES: I am here to repeal that legislation, and I am also here to bring about a reduction of the rents of the small, struggling selectors, because they are in a worse position than the big men.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): I think that the remarks of the hon. member for Albert were very unbecoming. As the Minister pointed out, he made a bald statement and also, by inference or innuendo, suggested the Labour party had been receiving certain money. Hon. members on this side of the Chamber never level charges against the Opposition unless they can produce evidence of the truth of those charges

in writing; and, if hon. members opposite wish to make any charge against this side, let them make it in writing, and let us have the evidence produced in this Chamber. The hon. member for Aubigny admitted that the paper quoted by the Minister had been floating round in their room for a fortnight, so that it is perfectly true, and we have documentary evidence against hon. members opposite. I do not think they should make charges against this side unless they, too, can produce documentary proof of their correctness.

In a previous speech I referred to the building of the Jondaryan school. It is a peculiar thing that the hon. member for Aubigny levelled all sorts of charges against the Government, and said that the men will not do a fair day's work. I say that the workers to-day will do a fair day's work, but there are cases—which we have proved—where men have not done a fair day's work, and that is one of them. We are always fair on this side, and we do not stand for men who will not do a fair day's work for a good day's pay. The hon. member said that the cost was only £2 over the estimate.

Mr. MOORE: I pointed that out as evidence of the unreliability of the estimate.

Mr. BRENNAN: The estimate was quite right. It was the estimate for a brand-new building, but a good deal of old material was used, and, instead of the cost exceeding the estimate by £2, there should have been a profit of £200. The foreman has been denounced by the other carpenters for having loafed, and he has been relieved of his position in Toowoomba. The Department of Public Works would not stand his working there. The Government were not to blame, and the complaint I have against the hon. member is that he knew that the estimate was for a brand-new building.

Mr. MOORE: I did not. It is not in my electorate.

Mr. BRENNAN: The men were all sacked. Why is the hon. member not fair? I say that, as a rule, the workers of Queensland generally, and the workers in the carpentry in particular, are conscientious, honest workers; but you do find such cases, and the Government are prepared to denounce such men. We are an honest Government. Hon. members opposite will not denounce such men. They will take advantage of anything to prove that we are not fair to the workers, and on the other hand they will abuse the workers when it suits them. It is very funny also to hear the hon. member referring to farmers here and farmers there. The farmers know on which side their bread is buttered and who are their friends. They have been enlightened lately as to the policy of this Government, and they are not to be gulled by any more of the "dope" of members of the farmers' party.

I did not know anything about the lights at the Toowoomba courthouse at night time. I do not go out very often at night. I complained about the lighting in the daytime. I believe, however, that the hon. member for East Toowoomba does go there at night to attend meetings; and, if there is a light there in the evening, I want it to be there also in the day time, because the staircase is very badly lighted and accidents have occurred there during proceedings in court. Now that the court house is in my electorate, I am going one further than the hon. mem-

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ber and I ask the department to have plans prepared to bring the staircase out on to the street, so as to make access to the court more convenient and easier for the public, and to have the staircase better lighted so that accidents will not occur in future.

Mr. DASH (*Mundingburra*): I am very pleased to see this amount on the Estimates for public buildings, and I am going to see if I cannot get some of the money spent in my electorate. Hon. members opposite have not put up any arguments against day labour whatsoever. We know that even when you employ contractors you have to employ somebody to watch them to see that they put the proper amount of work into the job. We know from experience that otherwise the work will be scamped. The work that has been done by the Department of Public Works in Townsville has been a credit to the workmen and also to the officers in charge. We have a technical college second to none in any part of Queensland, and, although we have not everything that is desired, it is hoped that during the next financial year something will be done in the way of building workshops. The committee have a fairly good credit balance, and they have always been up to the mark with the cash when estimates are being made for any new building or other work. I know why members of the Opposition favour piecework or contract. In their policy they have a plank which stipulates for the retention of contract and piecework. That was one of the matters mentioned in their manifestoes during the last election. It has been recognised by the Arbitration Court, for instance, in the local authorities' employees award that special provision should be made for contract work. It is provided that where local authorities let contracts to workers who do the work themselves they should receive a certain percentage over and above award rates, clearly proving that, by speeding up with leading hands and so forth, the contractor does get more out of his men than the council would get out of men on a similar job. The State does not believe in the nigger-driving which contractors go in for. We

[8.30 p.m.] hope that the department will carry out all its works on the day-labour system. It is not economical to send men into the country to do a job lasting only a couple of days. The Minister, who is a practical man in connection with the building industry, says that that practice is not now in vogue; that, wherever possible, local men are employed to do that class of work. The day-labour system pays better on big than on small jobs. Owing to the awards, the department realises that it must employ the men locally or pay them so much in addition to their wages for every week they are away from their homes. That is an incentive to the department to get the work done as cheaply as possible and to get it done well. No one objects to the local men doing this work in their particular towns; it is the only policy which could be adopted by the department. When it employs workmen, it gets the best workmen, because the workmen know that, if they get a job with the State, it is likely to be of a fairly permanent nature. I have had a good deal of experience of the work done on both brick and timber buildings. So far as I can learn, the workmen always complete it under the estimate. The men realise that, if they do not carry out the day-labour system as efficiently as possible, it will be only a matter of time when the

[*Mr. Brennan.*

contract system will supersede day labour. In the North the same class of men is employed by the State and by the contractor. I cannot, therefore, understand why hon. members opposite advocate contract.

I wish to thank the department for the amount of work which has been done in my electorate. I do not say that everything has been done for which I have asked; there is a good deal yet remaining to be done. The work done has been of a first-class nature, and is a credit to the State. I am going to keep on so that I will get a fair share of this vote. It will not be my fault if I do not get a little more. The hon. member for Kennedy complained that he did not get what he asked for. In the portion of his electorate which has been taken from mine, everything has been practically fixed up for some time, because I have had it attended to since I came to this House. I know there is an agitation for another school at the Giru sugar-mill. No doubt, it is badly needed. Some of the residents there are in a very bad position, because, when the heavy wet season is on—and it lasts some weeks—the children are unable to go to the school from their residences. If they happen to be crossing over the railway bridge, they are likely to meet a train unexpectedly. I know that the department is giving this matter consideration. The Giru centre is going to be a very big centre. A lot of farmers are beginning to employ men, and at the mill itself there is a lot of work to do. I am satisfied that the number of children is sufficient to establish a school. Building the school there will save the necessity for enlarging the schools at Hodel, Minehan, and Marblegram. This Government have spent more money on technical colleges and schools in the Mundingburra electorate than was spent by any other Government.

Mr. FOLEY (*Leichhardt*): There has been a lot of debate on this subject. I do not wish to add much more, particularly in view of the fact that the Minister has given such crushing replies to the criticism which has been levelled at his department. Owing to his replies and to the effective matter he has had behind him, he has absolutely demoralised the Opposition, until we see the sorry spectacle of not one being able to carry on the debate.

Mr. VOWLES: We do not want to stonewall.

Mr. FOLEY: As in all other debates in this Chamber, it will be recognised that a good deal depends upon what particular interests are affected. Had it been something affecting the mercantile interests of this State, the Opposition would have been supporting those interests, as they now are making a plea on behalf of the contractors of Queensland. Hon. members on this side have cited instances of the work done under contract. I could go on until to-morrow morning quoting my experiences of the slumping of work done by the contractors for whom I have worked. How did Sir Allen Taylor and a few of the large firms in New South Wales become wealthy? They did it under the contract system, by supplying to governmental and municipal bodies in New South Wales a class of timber other than that which was laid down in the specifications. I have cut timber for those firms, and that which has been supplied has been something other than has been specified. That goes on in the building trade right throughout Australia.

Mr. EDWARDS: You were prejudiced all the time.

Mr. FOLEY: I was not prejudiced. I was not a member of Parliament at the time; I was one of the proletariat. In connection with the supplies of timber to the railways in New South Wales, where iron-bark sleepers were specified the inspectors or the contractors passed blue gum and flooded gum—inferior timbers. The bulk of the blocks in the streets of New South Wales are not up to specification. There is a case before the court in New South Wales now which illustrates what contract work means in the municipal sphere. A man is being charged with conspiring with the contractors, and arranging that certain works would be guaranteed. Almost every hon. member opposite referred to the “go-slow” tactics which they said were adopted by the workmen under the day-labour system. The Minister quoted an illustration which came under his notice when travelling on one of the suburban trains which was held up for a few minutes. The men in the first-class carriages with high collars and stiff shirts were the first to criticise the work of the employees who had to work for eight hours with the “banjo” shifting muck. The men in the carriages could not go for half an hour in their own gardens. In my own electorate, when the State butcher shop was being erected at Emerald, one of the leading citizens in a state of excitement rushed across to the foreman of the job and pointed out to him that the men were sitting down smoking. Without going into the matter or making any investigation, he was politely told by the foreman that the workmen were quite entitled to sit down and have a pipe for a quarter of an hour at least, because the Arbitration Court judge had awarded them that privilege. That is an illustration of how individuals criticise the unfortunate worker, simply because he may be given a slight respite to which he is justly entitled, because he has to continue at a fair pace all day. The man who made the complaint I am referring to only had to drive a “quill” all day in a local bank. Another illustration can be given with regard to a railway job in the Capella district. When I visited my electorate a little while ago I was practically bombarded at every little town about the scandalous state of affairs in connection with the workmen engaged in building railway cottages. Upon making inquiry at the Railway Department as to the reason for delay in the construction of the buildings, I found that on this particular occasion drizzling rain had come on, and that owing to the character of the work the workmen could not apply their energies to the wet timber, and there was a provision in the award that they could “lay off” during wet weather. I received criticism of such a scandalous state of affairs in practically every town. The individual responsible for those complaints was mentioned by the Minister as being present at the conference when certain arrangements were being made by the Country party. One has only to visit work carried out by the department to know that the material is of the best, and that the workmanship is of the very best procurable. There are, unfortunately, instances where the department have been unfortunate in getting a foreman who is not up to the mark. On one job in my electorate one individual was the best part of a fortnight at an hotel, but as soon as the matter was brought under notice he promptly got the “order of the boot.”

Mr. EDWARDS: It does not often happen that they get the “order of the boot.”

Mr. FOLEY: In all instances where the workmen are not up to the required standard and a complaint is made to the department, which on investigation is found to be correct, they get the “order of the boot.” I think the Opposition have had the worst end of the debate on this vote. On one hand they claim that more money should be expended in the erection of schools and public buildings, although in the early part of the session they charged the Government with being an extravagant Government. Next session when these Estimates are being debated they will again come forward with their old charge of excessive use of public money.

Question put and passed.

COURT OF INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION.

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

“That £5,183 be granted for ‘Court of Industrial Arbitration.’”

The vote this year has been decreased by £613. The amount actually expended last year was £4,358.

Mr. GLEDSON (*Ipswich*): There is a decrease in this vote this year. From experience we find that the Arbitration Court at the present time is not functioning in the way that we thought it would. The experience of the workers of this State and throughout Australia to-day has been that the Arbitration Courts only take certain facts into consideration, and that certain things that the workers have to put up with are never taken into consideration by the court in fixing wages. Since the adoption of arbitration in Australia and other parts of the world, we find that the court has set down a certain standard, and they adopt what is the absolute minimum that a man can feed himself on and keep himself fit in order to continue to work and make profits for his employer. The court does not take into consideration what profits are made in an industry, and the workers are not receiving through the court a share of what they are producing in the industry.

Mr. EDWARDS: What about the industries which are making no profits?

Mr. GLEDSON: Directly the profits fall below a certain point the men are thrown on the scrapheap and become unemployed.

Mr. EDWARDS: What about the cattle industry to-day?

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not dealing with the cattle industry. The Arbitration Court has reduced the wages of employees in that industry without any regard to the profits previously made by the cattle owners. Year after year, since this Government came into power, the cattle owners and pastoralists generally have not paid the men anything like their fair share of the profits from that industry. The pastoralists have made large fortunes out of that industry. Take the income tax returns and see the incomes some of the cattle owners are making, and look at the wages the men are being paid. The same thing applies to other industries. Take the industry in which I have been engaged for a lifetime—the coal-mining industry. At the present time that industry is working under the Federal Arbitration Court as well as under an award of the State Court. The State Court fixed

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the wages in the industry, but in fixing that rate of wages the court did not take into consideration the profits being made in the industry. It took only into consideration what is the minimum amount that a man can exist upon. Just lately, the Court reduced the workers' wages by 5s. a week, because the cost of living has gone down, but it did not take into consideration what the employers were making out of the industry. Take the award in connection with storekeepers and packers. Quite a number of storemen and packers are employed in connection with the produce agency business, and their wages were reduced 5s. a week. That means that a produce agent who employs fifty men is able to save £12 10s. a week out of the wages of his employees, or £650 a year, and not one penny of that has gone back to either the consumer or the producer. The agents have charged the same commission that they charged previous to the reduction in wages. That 5s. a week reduction in wages was simply a gift to the produce agents. If an agent employed 100 men, it would mean £1,500 a year to him; and, if he employed 250 men, it would mean an absolute gift of £3,250 a year. The Arbitration Court did not take into consideration whether those industries were in a position to pay the award or not. Now take the attitude of the Court towards the workers. If the workers say "We are going to protect ourselves," as they have done in connection with the bricklayers, what is the attitude of the Court? The Court says, "We will take out the preference clause unless you leave your unions open and allow anyone to come in."

Mr. EDWARDS: Why should they not allow anyone to come in?

Mr. GLEDSON: In the first place, the court fixes the wages at a rate sufficient only to allow of a bare existence, and then they say, "You should allow everybody to come in, so that you will only get employment on two or three days a week."

Mr. KERR: If a man can get a job, should he not be allowed to join the union?

Mr. GLEDSON: After the unions have gone to the Arbitration Court and got good conditions these men come along and say, "Let us join the union."

Mr. KERR: That is not the position at all.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why did the hon. member not get into a union before he was forced into one? If a man will not join a union and join with his comrades in getting good conditions, he has no right to force a man out and take his place after good conditions have been obtained. If you will not allow the employers to take on any man they like—if you prevent them from employing a man who is not a member of the union—they say there is a strike on, and the court comes along and says, "We will strike out your award," but if the employer comes along and says he cannot afford to pay the rate fixed by the court and throws his men out of work—

Mr. KERR: You are building up a glass house. He does nothing of the kind.

Mr. GLEDSON: We have a case now in connection with the Miners' Union, of which I am an officer. In that union, not only did we have an award, but we had an interpretation from the tribunal that was appointed

under the Federal Industrial Peace Act as to the amount that had to be paid for timber work. But what did this mineowner do? He comes along and says, "I do not think I ought to pay it," and he closed down his mine and threw the men out of work. That occurred in the electorate of the hon. member for Aubigny; but we do not see that hon. member getting up in his place and fighting for those men. From 1st August these men have been thrown out of work because the employer was not prepared to pay the rates set down in the award.

Mr. KING: Is there any award to make the workers work?

Mr. GLEDSON: There is the law of starvation, which is used by the friends of the Opposition.

Mr. SIZER: Not when you give relief.

Mr. GLEDSON: Is there any law to make the worker work? Of course, there is a law—when he sees his "kiddies" come home at night and he has nothing to put in their mouths. That is the law which the friends of the Opposition are carrying out at the present time in Great Britain. I have here the "Manchester Guardian," which is not a Labour paper. A representative from this paper went along to the coalmining districts, and he reported as follows:—

"A young miners' agent here told me of a colliery workman whom he knows. The workman, like so many others just now, is working only three days a week and 'playing' the other three. He reported that he would not be able to come to the pit on his next working day. Why not? he was asked. The workman cried. His reason was that he had nothing to eat. He had to walk to the colliery from Wigan—4½ miles away—in the morning and back at night. His mate had brought food for him for the last two days. His wife had to take off her chemise, wash it, and pawn it to get some food.

"Men were doing this every day, said the miners' agent; walking backwards and forwards between Wigan and Hindley, doing a full day's work at the pit with no food, and sometimes collapsing from hunger. He had himself taken food to the colliery to share with miners and their families who were without.

"Three weeks ago, at a meeting of the local school attendance committee, a mother proffered reasons why her children could not attend school. They had no clothing fit to go in. The father, working three days a week, took no food with him to the colliery; the children had no food in the morning, none at dinner time, and a slice of bread each at night.

"The latest scaling-down has reduced the wages of these miners to the lowest point they can touch under the existing agreement. Wages at day rates are now 20 per cent. above those of 1914; the cost of living, according to Government figures, is 81 per cent. above that of 1914. The lowest-paid adult worker is the surface man with about 5s. 6d. per day. The day's pay of the most highly-skilled collier amounts to about 9s. 10d. The wages of the other grades fall somewhere between these two figures."

[Mr. Gledson.

At 9 p.m.,

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

Mr. KING: That is the thing to make a man work.

Mr. GLEDSON: Yes—one slice of bread at night, and nothing in the morning, and nothing at dinner time.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Tell us the tales about Russia. There is something worse there.

Mr. GLEDSON: I can give you tales about Russia. The hon. member for Oxley knows nothing about Russian conditions.

Mr. KERR: Do you know anything about them?

Mr. GLEDSON: I know something about them. I do not know all about the matter, because we cannot get a proper report of what is happening in Russia in the capitalistic Press.

A GOVERNMENT MEMBER: What about the Labour Press?

Mr. GLEDSON: We cannot get it in the Labour Press because the capitalists control the cables between here and Russia. The news is prevented from coming here, but when the truth is told about Russia we shall find that the Russian Government will not allow their children to starve under their system, and to go without dinner. They will not send the children to bed with one slice of bread in the day.

Mr. KERR: We have been told about the starving children in Russia, and have been sending food to them.

Mr. GLEDSON: What are the conditions under arbitration in England?

Mr. KERR: Talk about Queensland, and never mind Russia!

Mr. GLEDSON: Hon. members opposite do not like to have the conditions under Nationalist Governments exposed. They do not like the conditions under the government of their friends to be shown up.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: Did you see those 200 unemployed here yesterday?

Mr. GLEDSON: Hon. members opposite are barking like a lot of dogs. I want to point out that, whilst the wages of the miners in Great Britain have been reduced under arbitration—surface men having been reduced to 5s. 6d. a day, and other men to 7s. 9d. a day, or practically 20 per cent. over the 1914 rates—the cost of living has increased from 80 to 100 per cent. over the 1914 rates. At the same time the profits of the colliery proprietors in Great Britain have increased out of all bounds.

Mr. SIZER: If that is so, why did you support the Government in reducing the wages by the Arbitration Court?

Mr. GLEDSON: I can say that I did not support the proposal.

Mr. KERR: You voted for it.

Mr. GLEDSON: Hon. members opposite asked me a question, and then they will not allow me to answer it.

Mr. KERR: Tell the truth, then!

Mr. GLEDSON: I did not support the proposal to reduce wages, but I did support the proposal to reduce the hon. member's wages. That is what the hon. member for Nundah is complaining about. He is com-

plaining about the reduction of his own salary. Instead of stopping in the House when the vote was taken, the hon. member walked outside rather than support the measure to reduce his own wages.

Mr. SIZER: I voted for it.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member did not. He walked outside. I want to point out that the profits of the colliery proprietors have increased out of all bounds while the miners' wages have been reduced under arbitration. I would like to point out that the same thing applies in connection with the Federal Arbitration Court, and the Federal tribunal under the Industrial Peace Act. The position in the coal industry at present is such that there is likely to be a big upheaval in Australia, and that no coal will be produced in the Commonwealth in a few days, through the action of certain interests which are at work to prevent the miners from getting a decent wage. In the South Coast district of New South Wales, where there is a Nationalist Government in power, the men were working at a rate very much under the minimum wage. Under the efficiency clause they were entitled to have their wages made up to that amount, but the colliery proprietors refused to raise them to that amount. This matter has been hanging on for eighteen months. The Coal Tribunal promised the men that, if they would work, they would deal with the matter.

Mr. ELPHINSTONE: That was when the Labour Government were in power.

Mr. GLEDSON: The Federal Nationalist Government have taken control of all matters in connection with the coal industry. The Coal Tribunal met, but did not deal with the case. The colliery proprietors have since come along and asked for a 35½ per cent. reduction in the miners' wages. They say they are going to apply to the Federal High Court to get an injunction against the tribunal dealing with the efficiency clause. The tribunal said, "We will deal with the claim to reduce miners' wages by 35½ per cent., to increase their hours, and take away their Saturday half-holiday and make them work all day on Saturdays." There are several other things they want to take from the men—overtime and other payments. They will deal with those matters, but will not deal with the matter which has been hanging on over eighteen months.

AN OPPOSITION MEMBER: What is the cure for that?

Mr. GLEDSON: We want to appoint men to our Arbitration Court bench who know something about the industry. I think we ought to take the Arbitration Courts out of the hands of judges altogether, and put men in charge who have gone through the mill, and know what it is to be a worker, what it is to live on £4 a week and only have three days' work a week, and what it is to live for weeks without any wages at all.

Mr. GREEN: I thought the Arbitration Court judges were temperamentally fitted.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Townsville perhaps thought that Mr. Garbutt and Mr. Edkins were temperamentally fitted to decide what was to be the policy of the Country party. The leader of the Opposition does not think that they are temperamentally fitted.

Mr. WARREN: What do you think they are?

Mr. Gledson.]

Mr. GLEDSON: I am not here to give my opinion on that. All I have got to do now is to deal with this vote, and most of my time has been taken up in answering interjections.

Mr. KING: Do you favour wages boards?

Mr. GLEDSON: If we are going to get down to arbitration that would be a success, then we shall have to get away from the practice of fixing the minimum wage of the worker. We should not merely fix a wage that he can exist on. We have to allow him sufficient money to keep himself in bodily health. It is time that he got away from being a mere machine for the employing class and a machine for making profits for employers, because under that system, when a man is of no further use to them, they throw him out altogether. They tell him then that he can go to the Government and get relief, or go to Dunwich or anywhere else he likes. We have got to get away from that. We have got to treat the workers as being necessary to the community. Men should not be mere machines, as they are at the present time. To do that we must get arbitration away from the judges of the courts. We should appoint an independent man who knows something about what he is adjudicating on, so that he can give a decision on broad lines in the interests of the workers of the State and in the interests of the community. After all, we must all realise—the Opposition also—that every reduction in wages means less money in circulation, and that means less employment. We know that the workers spend every penny they get. You do not see the workers going to America or England for a trip.

Mr. KERR: You won't give a man a chance. You want to level everyone down; that is your policy.

Mr. GLEDSON: The hon. member for Enoggera must realise that there are two classes in the community. One is the class of people who work to keep those who do not work, and the second is the class who do not work but live on those who do. The capitalistic class have members of the Opposition fighting for them all the time. They provide them with funds to fight the workers with. These are the people who are on top every time. They control, not only members of the Opposition, but they control the capitalistic Press; they control the cables and everything else, and they also, to a large extent, control the wages of the workers. I hope that arbitration will be put on such a basis that future workers will not be tied down to the exact minimum that it is possible to pay them, but that they will get a decent wage for the work they perform.

Mr. CORSER (*Burnett*): We have just heard a diatribe from the hon. member, who is among those who wish to see the government of the country carried on by expounding class hatred and class consciousness. The hon. member for Ipswich tried to point out how badly off the workers of Australia, and Queensland in particular, are at the present time. We have got to remind him of the fact that, when the Government took office, members of the Opposition pointed out quite plainly what the position would be, because the Government were acting on unsound lines. They were expounding the theories of the stump orator, the man who breeds class hatred and tries to prevent the people of

Australia from settling down to industry and work.

At 9.15 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. CORSER: You cannot find hon. members opposite with one idea in the interests of building up industries. They are always expounding the theory that one section must fight against the other, and they can only exist by having continual strikes in industry and by destroying industry.

Mr. COLLINS: Is this your South Brisbane speech?

Mr. CORSER: It is not necessarily my South Brisbane speech, but the hon. gentleman should listen and digest it for himself. The workers of Queensland to-day, after being under the domination of a socialistic Administration for seven years, agree that the wages, despite Arbitration Courts, are no better than the wages were under the previous Administration in 1914. Hon. members are silent as to that statement.

Mr. W. COOPER: That is the younger ones. They may be getting smaller wages.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. gentleman admits something; yet his Government say they are going to rectify all things. They claim the votes of the younger section. Why do they not go to the younger section and tell them the truth? I have a quotation here from the "Standard" of 14th March, 1922, which says—

"The actual money value of the present high wages is 11 per cent. less than during the pre-war period. . . . As a matter of cold fact, the Australian workers were receiving higher wages ten years ago than at any period since."

That is from their own official organ. Here is another quotation from the "Railway Advocate," also an official organ of the Labour party, under date 10th February, 1922—

"The basic wage in 1911 was 51s. 3d., equal to £4 17s. 4d. in January, 1922, therefore the present basic wage is 17s. 4d. per week less than in 1911."

Those are admissions from their own official organ, which show that they are worse off since this Government have been in power. The Government came into power by promising the workers cheap food, cheap rent, high wages, and short hours. These are the things that they preached from the kerosene tins at election time. We find that after seven years in office a lot of the people have got no work at all, and their official papers say that those who are working are receiving less than was received under the last Administration. I consider that the Government are responsible for the unemployed which exist to-day, because they have killed industries, and because they have killed all incentive to thrift. People who have got money to invest are not going to invest it in industry under present conditions. That is the reason so many have had to close down.

Mr. FOLEY: Quote "Knibbs" on profits.

Mr. CORSER: We have only to look at New South Wales to see the unemployment that was created there by the Continuous Labour Government.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I ask the hon. gentleman to confine his remarks to the vote, which is "Court of Industrial Arbitration." If he can connect unemployment with that, he is quite in order.

[Mr. Gledson.

Mr. CORSER: I am coming round to it. (Laughter.) The Industrial Arbitration Court was established to provide a fair living, and we had a temperamentally fitted judge appointed. Now hon. members opposite are condemning the judge, and the hon. member for Ipswich says we ought to be more careful and appoint men who are fitted to the position. That is what the hon. member said who has just resumed his seat, and yet they appointed those judges themselves. I suppose they will have the audacity in the next generation to blame our children for the existing state of things, although we are on the Opposition side. Even to-day they would try to throw the blame on somebody else, yet one of their pet schemes when they came into power was industrial arbitration. They get up to-day and condemn it, and the whole of the community in the State, both employer and employee, agree that arbitration under present conditions is not sound.

Mr. PEASE: What do you think?

Mr. CORSER: If the hon. member will come to my room to-morrow, I will enlighten him. (Laughter.)

Mr. PEASE: Do your party not stand for industrial arbitration?

Mr. CORSER: We believe in giving to every member of the community the full reward of his labour and that, if a man is worthy of a high wage, he should get it. We believe that there should be employment for all, and that state of affairs can be brought about by giving to the Opposition the opportunity to govern the State. We believe, too, that no Arbitration Court should prevent men from entering into partnership with their employers so that they may receive some of the benefits of their production. Hon. members opposite do not want the people to increase production. They say, "Do as little as you can and create more employment," whereas that creates unemployment. Whether the worker be a maker of goods, a toiler on the roads, or a baker, if he does not produce to the best of his ability, we cannot be fed cheaply and well and have money to spend.

Mr. W. COOPER: If you get everybody to produce foodstuffs, you will have any amount of food.

Mr. CORSER: Hon. members opposite want the wealthy to take the job of the man with a pick and shovel.

Mr. W. COOPER: He should do his fair share, at all events.

Mr. CORSER: In the view of hon. members opposite, no man works unless he takes off his coat and toils at some labouring job. Every class of worker is useful in the community, and every worker knows that. Why should one man go and fill somebody else's job?

Mr. W. COOPER: It is not right to go and exploit the worker.

Mr. CORSER: If he is exploiting the worker, what are the Government doing? They got into power on the ticket that they were going to rectify all these things.

Mr. W. COOPER: We have rectified them.

Mr. CORSER: Then why talk about unemployment? (Opposition laughter.) We say that those unfortunate men who came here yesterday should at least have had the courtesy of a hearing from the Premier. I say that in all seriousness. Those members

of the community have a right to expect the Government to give them work, because the Arbitration Court was established to provide work for them. We were told that it was going to rectify conditions so that all could get work. The annual report of the Director of the Commonwealth Bureau of Commerce and Industry contains the following opinion:—

"When the worker is more of a partner in the enterprise, and knows what is happening and is permitted to share in the profits, I am of opinion he will accept some responsibility for loss and be prepared to share it."

At 9.25 p.m.,

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

Mr. W. COOPER: Do you agree with that?

Mr. CORSER: I do, and we should establish a system under which the employer is prepared to give that to the worker and share the profit with him, and we should not allow any Arbitration Court to interfere.

Mr. GLEDSON: Why not give the worker some say in the industry?

Mr. CORSER: Why not give him some say in the Tramways Bill?

Mr. GLEDSON: He has.

Mr. CORSER: The hon. member may have an opportunity to support a direct amendment in that direction.

Mr. GLEDSON: The workers will elect the board to control the undertaking.

Mr. CORSER: The tramway workers have asked for two representatives on the board, and the Government have refused their request.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. CORSER: Although hon. members opposite say that Australia is badly situated in comparison with other countries—although they have not included Russia—they have not remembered to say that there are 3,327,456 persons in Australia with deposits in our Savings Banks, with an average of £46 to their credit, and that they hold no less a balance than £154,396,051.

Mr. COLLINS: Now quote the millions of the capitalists. The other is a mere drop in the bucket.

Mr. CORSER: Let the hon. member quote the number of millionaires there are in Queensland. I suppose he would immediately point to some institution to which hon. members opposite may be lending money. It is very interesting to read in the annual report of the Bureau of Commerce and Industry, from which I have already quoted, the following extract:—

"The nation is a great co-operative society. Some men make boots, some make clothes, some produce fuel, and some raise food. The workers engaged in making boots, clothes, &c., get certain wages which they spend in buying boots and clothes, fuel and food. Now, if all the workers limit their output to the utmost, they may conceivably receive high wages, but there will be little food and fuel and few boots and clothes. There will be too few to go round, and the result will be that the workers are ill-clad and ill-nourished, whatever their money-wages may be, for one cannot eat money. If, on the other hand, all

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the workers produce, with the help of the most perfect machinery, vast quantities of clothes, food, fuel, &c., the goods produced will have to be consumed and they can be consumed only by the many. High production all round leads to great consumption all round. It makes clothing, food, fuel, &c., plentiful for the workers."

Hon. members on this side believe that a fair reward should be given to every worker, that there should be proper encouragement to produce, and that neither hon. members opposite nor their satellites outside the House shall create class hatred and prevent men from working, or point out to them that by such means they are going to create more wages and higher wages. That is economically unsound, for the higher our production the cheaper our means of production even in primary production, and the cheaper and higher our production the better for the State and everyone in the State.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumbidgee*): It seems strange that hon. members opposite should wish to cast slurs on members on this side so far as arbitration is concerned. I believe in arbitration. I do not think, as one hon. member inferred, that the members of the court should be temperamentally fitted for the position. I think that the Arbitration Court should adjudicate fairly between the worker and the employer. The hon. member for Mitchell the other night cast a slur on me by saying that I farmed the farmer. I believe in seeing an absolutely fair deal given. I believe that hon. members on this side stand for a fair deal to a greater extent than do hon. members on the other side. It is absolutely untrue to say that I am farming the farmer. The hon. member who made that statement paid £3 a week to a man who was working his pineapple ranch—hard toil in the sun. He found that that was too much, and he employed an old-age pensioner.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: He paid more than he was getting out of it.

Mr. WARREN: I pay £4 a week, which is more than the Government are paying to men who are working for them at Beerburum cleaning up the farms which have been deserted by returned soldiers.

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: Did you never pay less than £4 a week?

Mr. WARREN: Yes, I have, but not during the last five years have I paid a man of the full age who has been able to do a full day's work less than £4 a week. The Government should have the Arbitration Court put on them for their action in regard to Beerburum. Those men are being sweated by the Government. It is manifestly unfair that they should have to do the rough work of cleaning up farms at £3 a week. It is not sufficient to keep a man going. I admit that it is a very difficult proposition from the Government's point of view. At the same time it is absolutely wrong for those men to be sweated because the Government happen to be the Government. No man that I know along the North Coast line is paying less than £3 10s. a week. At Woombie, Palmwoods, and all the big fruitgrowing districts, they are paying from £3 10s. to £4 5s. a week. The clearing of these farms has been rendered necessary by the mistake which was made in putting men on land which was not fit for farming. I challenge hon. members

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opposite to say that it is right for the Government to take advantage of men who are wanting work, and I challenge them also to produce any evidence that members on this side wish to sweat the worker.

Mr. MOORE (*Aubigny*): When the Industrial Arbitration Act was going through we strongly objected to the preference to unionists clause being inserted, but that clause went into the Bill. What I object to now is that the employer is being made an organiser for the Australian Workers' Union. In my opinion, preference to unionists meant that, if two men applied for a job, one being a unionist and the other not, the job was to be given to the unionist.

Mr. W. COOPER: All things being equal.

Mr. MOORE: To-day we have got past that. The court has gone outside its jurisdiction in forcing preference to unionists in quite a different way. The last definition we have is contained in an award of 10th May, 1922. I am going to read the clause to show what I mean. It says—

"The employer, when employing or re-employing any worker other than a casual worker, shall make it a condition of employment that he shall (unless he is already a member thereof) agree to become a member of the Australian Workers' Union:

"Provided that if a strike occurs, any employer, on notice to the secretary of the union, may apply to the court for the abolition of preference either wholly or partially. Upon such application the court may vary or rescind this clause."

The court is forcing men to become unionists whether they want to do so or not, and forcing the employer to decline to give employment to a man if he does not belong to a union, even when a unionist is not offering for the job. The hon. member for Mount Morgan a few years ago said—

"The court is only useful in so far as the union is strong enough to enforce its demands from the court; and, if the union is strong enough to enforce its demands from the court, it can do it without the court."

That is an admission that the court is useful only when the union is strong enough to enforce its demands. What sort of court is that?

Mr. WEIR: That is not the logic of that argument at all.

Mr. MOORE: If the union is strong enough to enforce its demands, it is intimidation. Have we not seen that throughout Australia during the last two or three years the strongest unions get the best awards because they are able to enforce their demands in the court?

Mr. WEIR: Do you find that that applies in connection with Federal arbitration, too?

Mr. MOORE: Yes, it applies both in Federal and in State arbitration. I do not think the principle is a good one. The wages board system was far better.

Mr. BRENNAN: What about the Industrial Peace Act?

Mr. MOORE: There was nothing wrong with the Industrial Peace Act.

Mr. BRENNAN: It only bred strikes.

Mr. MOORE: We did not have many strikes under the Industrial Peace Act

There is no work now for the men to enable them to strike.

Mr. WINSTANLEY: Why did you abandon the wages board system?

Mr. MOORE: I have not the faintest idea. I suppose they thought they were going to get something better. The present Government abandoned the Industrial Peace Act and put the Industrial Arbitration Act in its place, saying that it was going to be final and there would be no appeal. The Queensland Government were the first to appeal. When we reach the stage that the Government cannot abide by their own court, but have to go in for super-arbitration, can anybody say that it is a success? The workers all over the State to-day are saying that the court is of no use to them. We have the spectacle of the workers, who at one time said the judge was temperamentally fitted, now abusing him. I do not agree that the Arbitration Court should only be used in the interests of unionists who are strong enough to force certain decisions. If the court cannot enforce its decisions, I do not see that it is of any use at all. The court has not been the success it should be. No court that does not take skill into account can be fair. If it is to be a success, it requires the whole-hearted support of both sections. Awards should be abided by loyally by both sections. If the awards are to be ignored, the court will not be a success. The court gave an award dealing with Mount Morgan. The men flouted that award and remained out of work. They could have gone back to work on the conditions on which they eventually went back long before they did. The court does not take into consideration the prosperity of an industry.

Mr. DASH: The court did in the cattle industry, and reduced the wages.

Mr. MOORE: If you are not receiving money out of an industry, how can you pay the wages?

Hon. W. FORGAN SMITH: The hon. member is on the wrong vote. The Department of Labour enforces the awards.

Mr. MOORE: I think the court has overstepped its powers in relation to preference. I think it is out of all reason. I object to being bludgeoned into the position of becoming an organiser of a large organisation. If a man offers himself for work, and he is not a unionist, if no unionist is offering, we have a perfect right to give him employment, without compelling him to join a union to which he strongly objects.

Mr. PAYNE (*Mitchell*): I am satisfied that we have some defects in our arbitration system, but it is a better system than the lopsided system we had in vogue a few years ago to settle disputes between capital and labour. I have always found defects in arbitration. No court that sets out to regulate conditions between the worker and the capitalist will be a success unless that court can have control over the cost of living. I said that many years ago, and it stands good to-day. The court has the power to fix a living wage, and may increase the wage of the worker in a certain industry this week, and next week that increase is taken away because of an increase in the cost of living. When Judge Higgins first sat on the Federal Arbitration Court he said that he felt sure that the court was not going to function in a proper way unless it could control the cost of living. The hon. member for

Murrumba made sneering remarks about an old man on my farm. If that old man does not receive better treatment on my farm than the hon. member gives his men, I will leave this Chamber. The man that does the work on my farm, when he is working, is paid 12s. 6d. per day. The hon. member for Murrumba prates about returned soldiers. I said on one occasion that he had five or six families on his dairy farm. I have since ascertained that during the last three years he has had six families on that farm.

Mr. WARREN: That is a lie.

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

Mr. WARREN: In deference to your wishes I withdraw the remark; but the statement by the hon. member for Mitchell is not true.

Mr. PAYNE: I am stating facts. I can get a written statement from the next-door farmer to prove that every word I say is true.

Mr. VOWLES: The hon. member is throwing mud.

Mr. PAYNE: I will throw more mud. The hon. member for Murrumba wears a returned soldier's badge on his coat.

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

Mr. PAYNE: The hon. member for Murrumba would not lend his horse and cart to a returned soldier who had been working for him to fetch his goods and chattels to the railway station. He had to get a horse and cart from the next-door neighbour's to fetch them down to the railway station.

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

Mr. PAYNE: It is admitted that there will always be defects in arbitration. I am of the opinion that, while the existing order is maintained, we shall have disputes. Arbitration will not settle all matters. It would be madness to abolish the Arbitration Court unless we can set up something better in its place.

Mr. BRENNAN (*Toowoomba*): It is generally recognised that we, as a Labour party, have a platform which no member has a right to deviate from unless that platform is altered by a Labour convention. Arbitration is one of the planks of the Labour platform, and we are bound by it. The hon. member for Murrumba referred to farmers paying from £3 10s. to £4 5s. per week. Imagine the farmers' party going out with their platform and advocating that farm hands should get from £3 10s. to £4 5s. per week! If he went to the Darling Downs he would be pole-axed for making that suggestion. The farmers could not afford, according to the view of hon. members opposite, to pay such a wage. They say we must not have the rural workers' log applied to the farmers. They also say that the farmers' children have to work in order to enable the farmers to make ends meet; yet we have one member of the party advocating from £3 10s. to £4 5s. per week, and then abusing the Government because they put men on to clean up farms when the soldiers have been unable to make a success of them. We have tried to make these farms available to other returned soldiers after being vacated by returned soldiers, and thereby absorb some

Mr. Brennan.]

of the unemployed who are also returned soldiers. Yet we find such a policy being abused by the hon. member for Murrumba. On the other hand, you hear a blare of trumpets at the Post Office. We are told that the Prime Minister once wanted a band to head a procession, and he was told it was not a circus. He replied, "What is politics but a circus?" The hon. member for Murrumba agrees with that, and at the Post Office we have a blare of trumpets.

The hon. member for Aubigny complained about the Australian Workers' Union having preference in connection with local authority work, and particularly on construction works. Yet on one occasion we had men leaving their farms, valued at some thousands of pounds, and bringing their teams in and working on construction works. They got the award rates, although they were not industrialists. They took out tickets in the Australian Workers' Union, and were thus enabled to deprive honest men who were following up construction work from receiving employment. They had their crops growing on their farms, but they were not satisfied with their crops and a guarantee of 8s. per bushel for wheat. They wanted to get all they could, and they came in and started this work and prevented regular construction workers from getting employment. The Arbitration Court should not allow men who have valuable farms and growing crops to step in and stop industrial workers from getting work. On the Willowburn construction works there were eight or ten farmers who had no right to be allowed to be employed there.

Mr. VOWLES: For the same reason you should not be allowed to grow wheat.

Mr. BRENNAN: I did not grow wheat. I put in a crop of wheat and took the risk, and the proceeds went to the Toowoomba Hospital. I did not make anything out of it. If every man did the same, the Toowoomba Hospital would be out of debt to-day.

At 9.55 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN resumed the chair.

Mr. BRENNAN: The hon. member for Aubigny objects to the one big union, yet he supports the Primary Producers' Organisation Act, which is the greatest communistic Act ever placed on the statute-book. We are constantly hearing the word "communistic" from the hon. member for Oxley. If they want to know what communism means, they go to the Primary Producers' Organisation Act.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Then it is nationalisation?

Mr. BRENNAN: Of course, it is nationalisation.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You denied it before.

Mr. BRENNAN: I did not deny it. We find in the city at the present time, at the corner of Elizabeth street, certain trouble arising because a contractor refused to conform to the Arbitration Court award. He is putting off men and putting on free labourers who are nothing else but "scabs." What chance has the worker of getting a fair deal unless he gets into one big union in order to preserve what he already holds? If any body of men out of work can go as free labourers to a man like Taylor, and deprive

those men who have fought for years to bring about a certain condition of things, it is unfair to deprive those unionists of their right to obtain the benefits of the Arbitration Court. We know the defects of the Arbitration Court, but at the present time it is the best system we know of, and it is no use altering the system and bringing in something of which we know nothing at all. The hon. member for Murrumba has all sorts of complaints about the Arbitration Court. I would like to see arbitration extended to the share system of farming. I know something about that system, having practised my profession on the Downs for some years, and the leader of the Opposition also knows something about it. The farmer usually has the thick end of the stick. He gets a man with a wife and four or five children to work his farm. He puts on a big herd of cattle, and he usually gives this man one-third of the net profits. He supplies the seeds while they supply all the labour. If you take the capital value of the land, the interest on the value of that land, and the cost of supplying seeds and plant, and put against that the supply of labour, it is a most unfair arrangement that the man who has the capital should get two-thirds of the profit and the man who supplies the labour only one-third. Probably, if the owner of that farm could get a better tenant to put more labour on that farm, without any reason he will dismiss this man with his wife and family. It has been done very often. I heard a reference to a certain man having had six families on his farm in one year, and he denied it. I know farmers on the Downs who have had four or five families on their farms in one year. These rack-renting landlords are all the same. What we want is an Act providing for one form of agreement in connection with this share-farming system, and no farmer should have the right to go outside the four corners of that one agreement. I know when Edward Denham, brother of the then Premier of Queensland, went all over the Downs and took up farms on the share system. He had the capital, and he put cattle on the farms, and if you saw the way that man treated his tenants, hon. members would agree that there should be an Arbitration Court award dealing with this share system of farming in order to protect those men who are forced to work for rack-renting farmers.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: How would you suggest having an Arbitration Court award?

Mr. BRENNAN: I say they should have some protection under an agreement. They should have a definite agreement.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: They have a definite agreement.

Mr. BRENNAN: A definite agreement in favour of the landlord.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Not at all. When the tenant farmer signs the agreement he shows that he is in favour of it. There is no compulsion.

Mr. BRENNAN: You will often find a clause in the agreement to the effect that the hay on the farm is to belong to the landlord. There may be a dry spell, and the tenant has to use the hay, and as soon as the hay is used, the landlord comes forward and takes the whole of the cream cheque, instead of the two-thirds to which he is entitled under the agreement, and he says

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to the tenant, "You know that is my hay." I have had experience in these matters.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: You have no experience.

Mr. BRENNAN: I have had experience. I have never farmed with Chinamen, like the hon. member has done. We must have protection for any man who has to work on a farm. The Opposition have nothing better to offer than the Industrial Arbitration Court; they want to get back to the old system of the Industrial Peace Act. We know there was a strike at Griffiths' Foundry, in Toowoomba. The firm was employing Russians, under the provisions of the Industrial Peace Act, and, because the Russians could not speak English, they were entitled to employ them at a lower rate of wages.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: The Russians believed in Communism.

Mr. BRENNAN: So did Griffiths Brothers.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: So did Brennan. (Laughter.)

Mr. BRENNAN: There was a dispute over the employment of these Russians, and some dispute with reference to employing Germans, but under the Industrial Peace Act you could not touch the employer on that account. There are no strikes in Queensland at the present time worth mentioning. During the last eighteen months this State has been more free from strikes than any other State in the Commonwealth. What is wrong with the Arbitration Act? The employers and employees are satisfied with it, although there may be a little dispute at times. Where there are complaints, we have an opportunity of remedying them. We have to stand for the Arbitration Court while it is a part of our platform. If the Labour Convention puts forward something better, we will adopt it; but at present we are going to support the Arbitration Court, and think that it should not be interfered with.

Mr. POLLOCK (*Gregory*): I am surprised that Opposition members should have the temerity to criticise the Arbitration Court. If there is one institution more than another that the Government ought to be proud of, it is the Arbitration Court, and one can only get an idea of its efficiency by comparing it with other Arbitration Courts established in Australia and other parts of the world. It is not necessary to go beyond Australia to find an Arbitration Court—a supposedly democratically founded court—that does not give anything like the same access to both employers and employees as the Queensland Court gives. When the present Premier introduced the Industrial Arbitration Bill in 1915, he laid it down that the fullest provisions were to be made for both employers and employees in cases of urgency and emergency to approach the court, and to obtain a fair hearing of all grievances. The Commonwealth Arbitration Court is an entirely different institution, and the reason why hon. members opposite are criticising this vote is probably because they would like a court something on the lines of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

Mr. GREEN: The hon. member for Ipswich criticised it.

Mr. POLLOCK: Almost every Opposition member has criticised the functions performed by the Arbitration Court. The hon. member for Oxley said that the time had arrived

when he believed that arbitration should be thrown overboard. I had a very bitter experience as an organiser of the Australian Workers' Union before entering Parliament in connection with the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. For many years we had organised the station hands with a view to putting their case before the court. The Commonwealth Act lays it down very definitely that no case can be heard in the Commonwealth Arbitration Court unless the dispute extends beyond the boundaries of one State. Two or more States must actually be engaged in a definite dispute before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court can intervene, so, naturally, its jurisdiction is limited. We organised the station hands for about six or seven years and found it very difficult to approach the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. It was not an industry where men congregated in large numbers like the meat-works hands or the shearers in the shearing-sheds. The station hands could not create a definite strike extending into two States in order to bring their case before the court, so it took six or seven years before we could get a hearing, although perhaps the station hands were better organised than any body of men in the Commonwealth. Almost every man working on the stations in Queensland and in many parts of New South Wales, also in South Australia and Western Australia, was a financial member of the Australian Workers' Union. They had a grievance, because the wages were not commensurate with the tasks they were called upon to perform, but they could not approach the court because they could not create a strike in two States. After waiting many years they approached the Queensland Arbitration Court, and in a short time were given a hearing. That shows the difference between the Queensland Court and the Commonwealth Court. For many years those men collected evidence, and were prepared to go before the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. I had signed affidavits from hundreds of workers on different stations stating that the amounts paid to them were not sufficient, and giving information about the cost of living to show that they should receive an increase. In Queensland there is always a judge available to hear the cases brought before the court. The Commonwealth Arbitration Court had sixty cases waiting to be heard. Some of them were waiting for six or eight or ten months. In spite of that, they never appointed more than one judge of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court. Mr. Justice Higgins for years had the whole of that work on his shoulders. The result was that many men who wanted to approach the Arbitration Court—they were not actually on strike but they had a grievance—were not able to do so because there were so many cases waiting to be heard.

Mr. SIZER: They have overcome the difficulty by appointing more judges.

Mr. POLLOCK: The hon. gentleman has no idea of the subject when he says that. The only additional judge was Mr. Justice Powers, and, some time after he was appointed, Mr. Higgins resigned.

Mr. SIZER: Mr. Webb, of South Australia, and Sir John Quick, of Victoria, have since been appointed judges of the Commonwealth Arbitration Court.

Mr. POLLOCK: That must be because we are approaching a Federal election. There was only one judge of the Commonwealth

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Arbitration Court for years until Mr. Justice Powers was appointed. Mr. Justice Higgins resigned and Mr. Justice Powers carried on alone until a few days ago, when, as the hon. member for Nundah says, two more judges were appointed.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Why did not Mr. Fisher appoint extra judges?

Mr. FERRICKS: He tried to widen the powers in order to allow the Commonwealth Court to deal with cases arising in one State.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am making a comparison between to Commonwealth and Queensland Arbitration Courts, to show that our own court is a very efficient court. I think I am proving that. It does not matter to me whether Labour men have failed to do these things in the Commonwealth Parliament or not. The fact is that the Queensland Government have not failed, that they hold that the court is all that it is claimed to be, and that it is easily the most advanced institution of its kind in the world, where the employer and employee can get redress at the shortest notice, and where the judge is entirely independent. Nobody can say that the judges of our Arbitration Court are not in an independent position.

Mr. VOWLES: I hope so.

Mr. POLLOCK: Does the hon. member mean to say that they are not in an independent position? That is the sort of innuendo that one expects from him. Plenty of rumours have been going around that these gentlemen are temperamentally fit and that sort of thing; but the fact remains that they are there for a certain term, and they can do what they like for that term. The suggestion has been made that they are not independent, and I wanted to know whether the hon. member makes that innuendo.

Mr. VOWLES: I presume all judges are independent.

Mr. POLLOCK: I am quite content to leave it at that. Everyone knows that the judges are independent, and that the machinery of the court is the most up-to-date in the world. I challenge the hon. member to show me any court in the world which gives better facilities to the parties. If that is so, what is wrong with the arbitration system, except that hon. members opposite may want to revert to that old state of affairs when men had to meet their employers around a table and discuss what wages they were going to be allowed to receive? Arbitration was introduced only because the men who were working for a living could not get a fair deal at those conferences. I have been on any amount of them, and I know that the men who were standing against the employers had no chance at all of getting a fair deal.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Will you say that no mistakes have been made in the Queensland Arbitration Court?

Mr. POLLOCK: I will leave it to the hon. member to say what mistakes have, in his opinion, been made. I am not criticising the court. I am saying that it is the most up-to-date and most efficient, and, in my opinion, as fair a court as exists in any country in the world.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Do you not think it could be improved?

Mr. POLLOCK: I do not think the hon. member or his colleagues would attempt to

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improve it in any direction that would give a better deal to the worker. I am sorry that I cannot answer the hon. member's questions in a way that will suit his book.

Mr. VOWLES interjected with reference to the basic wage.

Mr. POLLOCK: That is another question that the hon. member will have answered in due course. I have said in this House that I am prepared to trust the court in the fixation of my salary, and that is more than the hon. member is prepared to do. At any time I am prepared to leave the salaries or emoluments, or whatever you like to call them, of any person in the community to the Arbitration Court. I do not want the Arbitration Court for the workers and a special tribunal to fix my salary or the salaries of my colleagues. I say that in a case of this kind the Arbitration Court is competent in every way to fix wages in Queensland, and I only hope that the old system of employers meeting employees around a table has been discontinued for good. No body of employees will willingly meet their employers around a table in conference.

Mr. MOORE: They do that now very often by order of the court.

Mr. POLLOCK: They meet their employees in conference by order of the court; but the court is always there. If the employers want to squash them and the men will not stand it, they can refer the dispute back to the court. Under the old system, what opportunity would these men have of getting a fair amount of redress with conditions as they are to-day, or as they were a few months ago? What opportunity would they have, if compelled to meet their employers, of demanding a decent wage commensurate with the work they were doing? Hon. members opposite, being believers in the law of supply and demand, would insist on those men taking probably one-half the wages they are receiving now. By force of circumstances the men would be compelled to accept that. The Arbitration Court fortunately stands between them and that necessity.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Do you believe that there should be no such thing as efficiency—that every man, good, bad, and indifferent, should be paid the same rate of wages?

Mr. POLLOCK: I am not here to answer questions for the hon. member for Pittsworth in such a manner as would suit his book. The Opposition are ill-advised in their condemnation of a court such as this. I believe they would be better advised if they did as some of the shrewder of them think they should—said nothing about what they are going to do until they happen to be returned to power—whenever that may be; I do not think it is going to be at the next election, in any case. If they were to say nothing about their intentions in regard to the Arbitration Court, they might have a chance of getting on these benches. When they openly, as they have done to-day, say that they are determined to see that the old wages board system again comes into existence—when they show the people in other directions that they are prepared to repeal most of the legislation passed by this Government and hand back to certain of their friends money that has been rightfully collected from them by the Crown, they have

not very much chance of getting over here. The party bosses have decreed that every member of the Northern Country party will be pledged to repeal the "Repudiation" Act and to give back this money. Whether they will carry out those pledges is another matter. The minutes of that meeting definitely show that they are to hand back that money or they will not be the endorsed candidates. I suppose that the majority of Country party members will be in the same position; they will have come to heel or they will be plebiscited, and men will be put in their places who will do as they are told. The revelations made to-day by the Minister are certainly welcome to this Chamber, as they give us and the people outside some idea of the negotiations that are going on in an attempt to down the Labour party, and they show what will happen if these gentlemen are returned to power.

Mr. WARREN (*Murrumba*): It seems to me that an attack on share farming, especially when it is what I consider to be not a truthful statement, is wronging a big body of people. While there is a big return, a share farmer certainly gets a big rent for his land; but when times are bad he is actually losing money on the transaction. I make no apology for any share farmer working for me. No share farmer who has worked for me has made less than wages. I mean by that that he made more by working on the share system than if he had been receiving wages. I do not say that it is not a good thing to have a man working on the share system if he is a good farmer. If you can get a good man to manage that farm year in and year out, he will make more in that way.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I hope the hon. member will connect his remarks with the vote "Court of Industrial Arbitration."

Mr. WARREN: You allowed certain hon. members opposite to make certain statements.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The debate, as far as I allowed it, was as to a suggestion that share farmers should come under the operation of the Industrial Arbitration Act. The hon. gentleman will be in order in showing that that should not be done. I do not want him to infer that I am giving privileges to certain other hon. members that I am not giving to him.

Mr. WARREN: I do not infer that. The share-farming system is a good one. It would be impracticable and unwise to bring share farmers under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court. By doing so you would be preventing some men from making a start on their own, and consequently there would be more harm done than allowing the present system to remain. I admit that there are cases of hardship, but a man need not remain in those cases. He can pack up his traps and go out. I would like to refer to certain statements made by the hon. member for Mitchell. I have never gone into anybody's electorate and mixed with the lowest company possible in order to work up a charge against any hon. member. I stand for a fair and square deal.

Mr. PAYNE: Who did? I have a cleaner record than the hon. member.

Mr. WARREN: I have never gone to the depths of attacking any hon. member either

inside or outside of this Chamber. I intend to quote a letter sent to me.

Mr. PAYNE: Quote the letter where you refused to lend that man who was working for your cart to take his luggage to the railway station.

Mr. WARREN: That is absolutely untrue. That man never asked me for the loan of a cart. As a matter of fact, I was not within 50 miles of the place when he left. The letter I received reads—

"Dear Mr. Warren,—I was reading the paper to-day and I see where Mr. Payne was poking in dirt as regards farming the farmers. Well, if you do not know how his pineapple farm is worked I will tell you. I do not think you do, or else you would have 'applied the gag.' Now, as Mr. Payne has a pineapple farm adjoining my brother's place just behind Traill's, I might say that he has an old-age pensioner working, or trying to work, about 6 acres of pines. Some time ago he employed Thomas Anderson to do the same work, and he paid him at the rate of 10s. a day (he is a married man and has two children). That same landlord says 10s. a day is too much for a farm labourer, and, of course, it is, no doubt, when a man can be got for less than £1 a week. I am a very poor hand at writing a letter, but all the same, when he talks about farming the farmer, just mention farming the old-age pensioner. If you at any time get a chance see Thomas Anderson—he lives just above Matt Ryan's on the Gympie road going towards Morayfield—and I am sure he can tell you better than I can about that farm and its workings. Of course, I do not want to see the old age pensioner lose his job, as I am not after one, but I am pointing out these few facts just to show you the principle of some of our worthless Labour members. I would be very glad if you do not mention my name."

I may say in fairness to this man that he came to me personally after I received this letter, and told me that I was at liberty to use his name. The letter continues—

"although I do not think he can do me any harm."

Mr. PAYNE: I rise to a point of order. According to the Standing Orders, the hon. member must lay that letter on the table of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: I would inform the hon. member that, under the generally accepted parliamentary procedure, he must lay the letter on the table.

Mr. WARREN: This gentleman met me and told me that I could use his name.

Mr. BRENNAN: He is a "rotter" anyway.

Mr. WARREN: The letter continues—

"but I will explain things better to you when I see you personally, and if you do care to seek more news, I will find out the name of the old chap on that pineapple ranch. I might also say that the farm is somewhere about fifty acres, perpetual lease, and is for sale for the small sum of £900. No house on same. (Robbing the farmer.) With kindest regards."

The SECRETARY FOR AGRICULTURE: What is the name of the writer?

Mr. Warren.]

Mr. POLLOCK: Mr Chairman, I ask that your instructions regarding the laying of the letter on the table, be carried out.

Mr. WARREN: I am going to lay it on the table.

Mr. POLLOCK: I ask that it be laid on the table now.

Mr. J. H. C. ROBERTS: Lay it on the table to-morrow.

Mr. WARREN then laid the letter on the table.

At 10.30 p.m.,

The CHAIRMAN said: Under the provisions of Standing Order No. 307, I shall now leave the chair and make my report to the House.

The House resumed

The CHAIRMAN reported progress.

The resumption of the Committee was made an Order of the Day for to-morrow.

The House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.